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# The SMART SET

*A Magazine of  
Cleverness*



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FIFTH AVENUE & 37<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
NEW YORK

Vol. XXXVII

JULY, 1912

No. 3

# THE SMART SET

A MAGAZINE OF  
CLEVERNESS

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$3.00

SINGLE COPIES 25 CENTS

Entered at New York Post Office as second class mail matter

Issued monthly by John Adams Thayer Corporation

JOHN ADAMS THAYER, President

452 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

MARK LEE LUTHER, Treasurer

# The August SMART SET A Foretaste

The Magazine of Cleverness

For Minds That Are Not Primitive

**W**HEN THE AUGUST NUMBER comes out it'll probably be pretty warm—the weather, that is . . . . Oh, well, yes, you will have your little joke! However, we're trying to lead up to the argument that warm weather encourages people to get hold of some good interesting light reading and go off somewhere and try to keep cool—the book and hammock idea, you know. . . . No argument needed, you say? All right; then the stage is all set for our grand hot weather scene: summer afternoon—shady spot—girl in hammock (or woman or man—it doesn't matter which); all that's needed is the reading matter.

Enter, then, THE SMART SET. "Aha! I have thee!" cries the girl in the hammock (or woman or man), clasping us to her (or his) bosom. And there, for the present the veil must be drawn over this tender scene.

BUT HERE, A MONTH AHEAD, you will want a brief peep at this August number. We've tried to make it one of the very best numbers of the year. . . . We say that about every number? Well—this time we'll prove it. What's the most interesting thing in fiction—in any land, in any language, in any age? . . . A woman—of course! Everybody knows that. Well, we've started off the August number with a novelette that's just the concentrated quintessence of woman—woman to the *n*th power—woman so highly developed in so many ways that man is a mere adjunct and appurtenance to her.

THIS BRILLIANT NOVELETTE, which is entitled "The Superwoman," is the work of Miriam Michelson, well known as the author of "In the Bishop's Carriage." It is one of the most original and diverting pieces of imaginative fiction that we have had since "The Haunted Pajamas" and "The Cave Man." It is a story that will interest everyone and arouse wide discussion, especially among women, since the "woman question" is so much in the foreground

these days. Suffragists may find encouragement in this story, or they may not; but they can't help being interested in it.

NINA LARREY DURYEA contributes a story to this August number, "The Perfidy of Sylvia," that presents a delicious picture of a Parisian adventure in which a "cabby" plays a leading part.

LEO CRANE'S story, "The Night Watch," is a strong picture of an unusual phase of newspaper life.

ELLIOTT FLOWER writes of a wife who desires "economic independence," and shows, in "On a Business Basis," how a husband and wife worked out the problem.

EDGAR SALTUS, whose work is known everywhere for its delightful whimsicalities and the piquancy of its wit, has written an essay for this number on "The Bankruptcy of Beauty," and draws some interesting deductions from the trend of fashions and modes of life of these later years.

A ONE-ACT PLAY by Maverick Terrell and O. H. Stechhan, "You Never Can Tell About a Woman," will be a feature of this issue. Readers will recall their play "The Real 'Q'," which we published a year ago, and for which over a dozen offers for the dramatic rights were made.

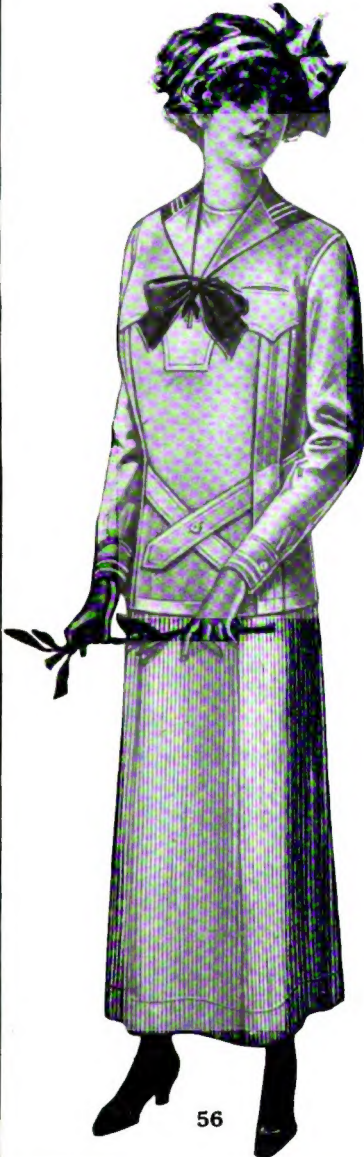
OTHER FEATURES planned for this August number include "The Making of a Man," by Elizabeth Herrick, a story of one man who did *not* "have his price"; "The Solvency of Parker Perry," by Joseph Ernest, a story of an unusual debt and its unusual form of payment; and stories by Marion Ashworth, Harriet Gaylord, Archibald Sullivan and others.

Inasmuch as we have here a novelette about women of one sort, a story about woman's "economic independence" and a play about yet another type of woman, this will be emphatically a "woman's number." It ought therefore to be of intense interest to men.



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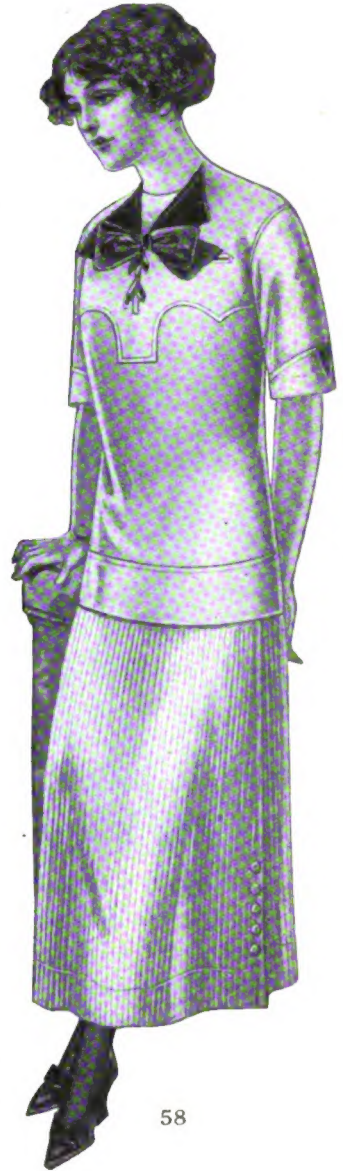
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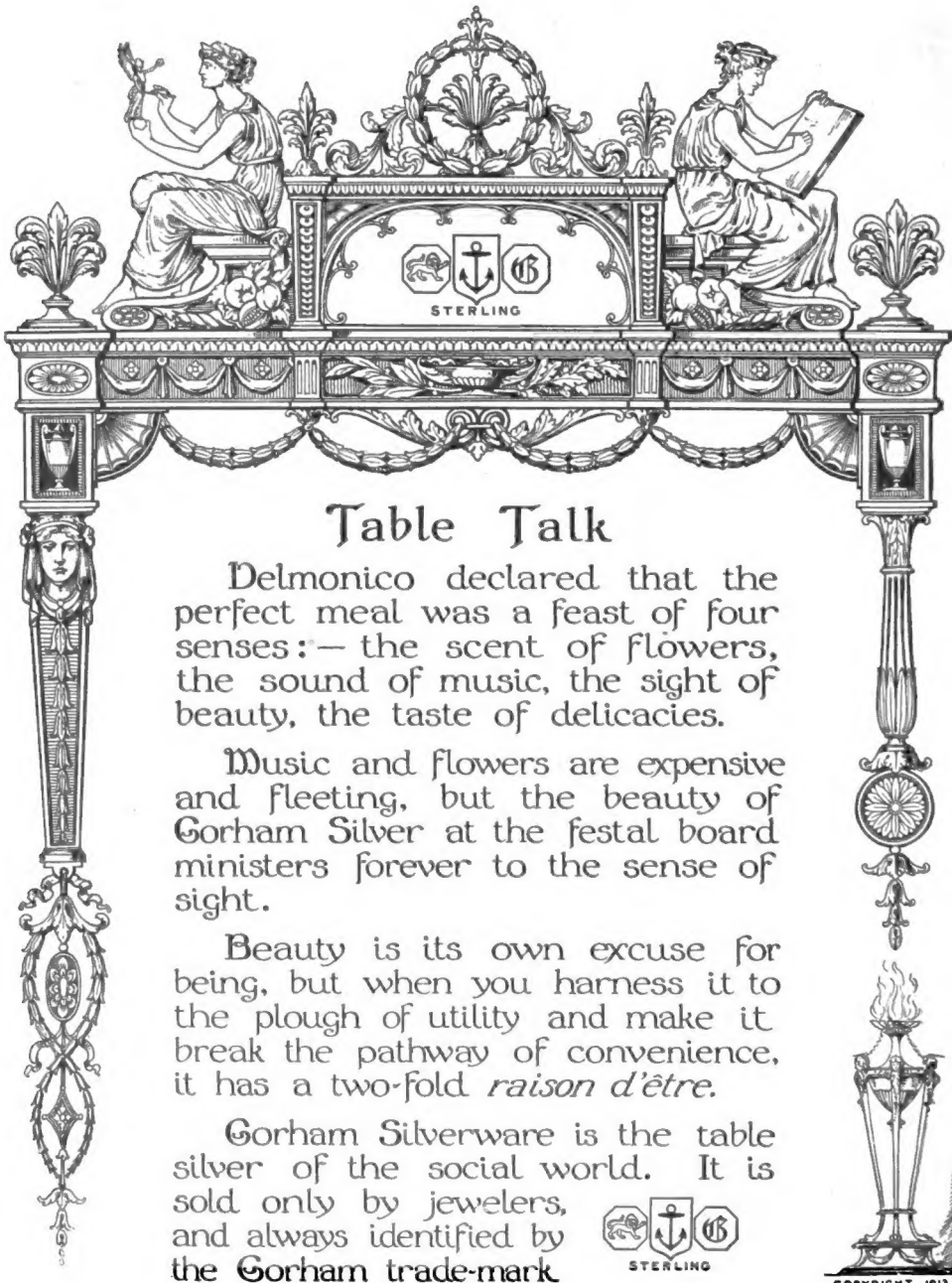
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*HERO AND LEANDER*

*From the painting made for The Smart Set Magazine by André Castaigne*

# THE SMART SET

*Its Prime Purpose is to Provide Lively Entertainment  
For Minds That Are Not Primitive*

## A PAID HUSBAND

By Forrest Halsey

"KILL mother, will I?" The pal-  
lor of last night's dissipation  
disappeared in the flame of the  
morning's anger as the boy sprang to  
his feet. "What about your getting  
divorced, and all our names in the  
paper?" Mrs. Catherine Lawton drew  
herself up. "And *your* having nervous  
prostration until you got the money out  
of mother for the animal shelter?" Miss  
Ellerby drew herself up. "And the both  
of you spending money hand over fist,  
when you know well enough she hasn't  
got it? You both nearly killed her last  
week over that dance. You know she  
had to give a note for the money."

"She did the same for your college  
debts."

"Why don't you get a position and  
help her?"

"Damn it, ain't I tryin' to get  
one?"

"Don't swear; it is disgusting."

"You are so common."

"Can I go into Bott's shoe store?"  
cried the lad passionately, tears in his  
eyes, rage in his voice. "Or get the  
butcher to let me drive a wagon? I'm  
training for the law, and I have got to  
go into a law office."

"Well, you needn't get drunk."

"Or get arrested."

"I don't care if I did get arrested."

"Well, we care—seeing the family  
name in the police court."

"Ah, I suppose the only respectable  
court for the family to appear in is the  
divorce court!"

"Well, it is far more proper than the  
police court."

"Why don't you go for Bush? He  
gets soused."

"He doesn't get into the papers," said  
Miss Ellerby.

"Your language is disgusting," said  
Mrs. Lawton.

"Darn this family! A lot of old hens!"  
A napkin was cast violently among the  
breakfast silver and the door slammed  
behind the youngest of the house of  
Ellerby.

For a moment there was silence in the  
big sun-filled room. The dim family  
portraits smirked from chipped and  
tarnished frames upon the two women at  
the table. Doubtless the smiling im-  
perturbability of the portraits, belonging  
as it did to a bygone time of good breed-  
ing, helped them to disregard the lack of  
it in their descendants. Not that the  
Ellerbys, judged by the modern stand-  
ard, lacked breeding—far from it; but  
their day had seen fit to mark their class  
with absence of artificiality, as it had  
marked their forebears with it. Though  
it is to be doubted if even in the day of

July, 1912—1

steinkirks and rose pink coats family quarrels were distinguished by the niceties of the drawing room or dueling field.

Catherine Lawton looked at the closed door, then at her sister. "I suppose," she said placidly, "we must make up our minds that Thornton will be another drunkard like Uncle Bushrod." She spoke as if she were saying that they must resign themselves not to have the drawing room done over that year.

"We always have everything in our family," replied Miss Ellerby with fretful despair.

"Meaning a divorcee?" Mrs. Lawton gave her strict attention to her sister's abundant but carelessly dressed hair. "Turn your head a little more to the window, Angelica."

"What is it?" said the unwary Angelica.

"H'm—is that the light, or is it more gray hairs I see?"

"It is the gray hairs you have commented upon ever since you came home. Is the room too warm, Catherine? Your face is so flushed."

"It is not a flush; it is rouge. I will not look like the yolk of an egg in the morning," placidly returned Mrs. Lawton.

"I should think that you would be afraid of men speaking to you on the street."

"Well, I always like to feel that they would if they dared."

"Thank goodness, my life is not spent in thinking about men," said Angelica.

"Your life is singularly free from any worry of that sort," said her sister, exploring a covered dish.

"However"—Miss Ellerby buttered a roll—"if I decided to take one, I should try to keep him."

"My dear"—Mrs. Lawton's tone was that which is bestowed at the altar and is marked "for married women only"—"you know nothing about it. You have never been given the opportunity of knowing whether you could keep a man or not."

"Every woman can always marry if she is not particular." Miss Ellerby spoke with calmness, but tore a roll as if it were one of the hated sex.

"My dear Angelica," spoke Mrs. Lawton, wrapped in matrimony as in a mantle of wisdom, "that remark is made by every unmarried woman, but when a woman gets 'Mrs.' on her name, no matter how, there is no possibility of mistaking the fact that some man has cared for her. Otherwise she can talk until she is black in the face and no one will believe her." She allowed her attention to become absorbed in the reflection of her "smart" figure and tight, smooth head as presented for her approbation in the mirror above the sideboard. Catherine Lawton at forty looked as if she had been created by a good heavenly tailor and handed over to one of the best earthly ones to clothe.

"Pardon me if I do not devote all the time that I should be eating breakfast to the discussion of how unattractive I am," said the elder sister with icy fretfulness.

The firing died out along the lines of battle at the appearance between the combatants of an elderly parlor maid bearing the mail. Mrs. Lawton asserted her precedence as a married woman by taking the letters. The elderly maid yielded them with an obvious reluctance significant of the position which her years of service in the family had given her. As she left the room her back expressed a hot displeasure, prevented from boiling into speech only by the removal of her person from inflammable proximities.

"Bills, bills, bills!" The oblong envelopes flew from the plump ringed hands onto the tablecloth. "I should think mother would be ashamed not to pay them."

"Celeste was positively rude about my new hat." Evidently from Miss Ellerby's modified tone here was a common ground of attack where forces could be united without prejudice to later engagements.

"Why doesn't mother sell something and pay them? I think it is common to be always meeting tradespeople in the hall." Suddenly Mrs. Lawton's tone took a more vivid tint of interest; she held up a mauve envelope. "She has written to him again. Look at it! Raw

purple—enough to set your teeth on edge!”

“Bush says she is very rich,” said the interested Angelica.

“Judging from her stationery, she is the kind of creature who is broken out with diamonds like a nettle rash.”

“She will never get him,” said the other with finality. “Bush is too particular.”

“Imagine having stationery like that in the family!” The offending envelope was laid beside a plate; Mrs. Lawton’s gesture was that of one putting a contaminated garment upon the fire. She became absorbed in her mail. Suddenly she started violently. From her birth she had done all things with suddenness or violence. “Listen!” she cried. “Elinor has met her; she is staying with her at the Mason-Willings’.” Mrs. Lawton cleared her throat and read:

“The rich Miss Manson came Saturday. She wore at the ball a gown—no, a dress—adorned with bunches of—well, wampum is as near as I can describe it, and had cascades of pearls thundering down the front of her, and explosions of spangles all over the back of her.”

Mrs. Lawton swallowed violently. “Think,” she cried—“*think* of creatures like that having money for clothes! They would be just as happy in a gunny-sack.” She returned to the letter.

“Evie Grenfell has had her with her, and proposed her along with herself for the Mason-Willings’.”

“That is where Bush met her—at the Grenfells’,” interjected Angelica.

The other continued, reading feverishly:

“And from what Evie said, Bush certainly slipped her a steer.”

“What does she mean? Elinor has grown so vulgar since she married.”

“Oh, she is trying to be like that common, slangy husband of hers. How she can bear him! I don’t care if he is a Fosdick; he is as common as kraut. I do think this family and its connections are the homeliest lot. I will say one thing for my ‘ex’—he stood out in a crowd.”

“I should think you would be ashamed to mention his name,” said the other.

“I would rather talk about him than

do as you do about Wouter Van Winner-coup,” retorted the matron.

“He did propose to me.” A faint red showed in Miss Ellerby’s cheeks. For a moment she looked handsome in spite of the disarray and lack-care look of her whole person. Evidently long ago Miss Ellerby had been a pretty girl.

“I don’t dispute it,” replied Catherine wearily; “I was too young to know.”

“He did.”

“Do stop talking about a man who has been married for twenty years.”

Miss Ellerby opened her lips to speak, but the impulse died and she sat silent.

“Listen,” cried Mrs. Lawton again from the depths of the letter:

“Evie says the heiress is crazy about Bush. When she was introduced to me and heard I was his sister, she turned scarlet. Later she actually tried to paw me.”

“He got a package from Long Island yesterday,” interjected the elder sister.

“She has worked him a pair of carpet slippers,” replied the other as she returned to the letter. Once more she gave a start, this time with sufficient violence to unsettle the seemingly solid architecture of her back hair. “She is coming here!” she cried.

“Who—Elinor?”

“Both of them.”

“You can’t mean it!”

“It is here in black and white. They will stop by on their way from the race—they are to be at the Wilkeses’. She is following him up.”

“That means,” said Angelica, with bitter resignation to the imbecility of her sex, “that Bush has kissed her. He always does. He says that no introduction is complete without it. If he goes on kissing strange women, he will get in trouble some day.”

“Well”—the tight gown of the one crowned with matrimony creaked as she drew herself to heights of disgust—“that Elinor Fosdick can’t fool me, if she *is* my sister. She got the creature that invitation to the Wilkeses’. Charlotte Wilkes would never, *never* have thought of inviting her if Elinor had not put her up to it. Elinor is so mercenary. She is trying to catch Bush for that horror. Well, I, for one, will not lend a

hand to the disgraceful proceeding. And if that woman comes to this house, I will show her—" She became rigid and gave a practised glare at her sister, much as a star may rehearse her best scenes with an understudy in the absence of the villain. "But," she continued, too absorbed to note the opening of the door behind her, "I do not believe that Bush would do such a thing. He has too much refinement to marry a woman all broken out with diamonds."

"Where is mother?" asked the man who seated himself at the breakfast table. His sisters regarded him with startled unease.

As Mrs. Lawton said, Bushrod Ellerby had refinement. Whatever coarser inner fibers there might be in the man—and if reports of his life were true they existed—did not show on the surface. In a society essentially amorphous, he was conspicuous by the look of race selection, by bearing the impress of a definite blood and indefinite impulses and ideals, which we misterm but epitomize in the word "aristocratic." His dark, fine head, the clearly modeled features, his height, gave him a distinction, an air of race. The ironical eyes and slightly cynical lips stamped him with that kinship which relates the man of the world to his brother of the world everywhere, regardless of nationality. As they sat at their breakfast table the Ellerbys represented in an amusing degree the American family claiming "aristocracy." They had in their family tree some splendid names, historical both in their own country and in England. Like other "old families," they recognized only the distinguished names with which they were connected, and ignored the humble women, bondservants, with whom the male bearers of those names had propagated their race in the new country to which the younger sons had come as *conquistadores*. The Ellerby tree, like its kindred in the forests of the New World, resembled a crowded harbor in a fog, in that there was much obscurity illuminated by occasional bright lights. Humble ancestors, ignore them as we will, still have a good deal of the persistence of the poor relation;

and the strong, florid humble women of the past were present at that table in the person of the highly colored and very "smart" Mrs. Lawton, as the cavaliers were present in the person of the man who, with a careless glance at the address on the mauve-missive beside his plate, turned to the elder sister and repeated:

"Where is mother?"

"She has one of her headaches."

"Bush"—Mrs. Lawton sprang to her feet—"I want the trap for the eleven ten train."

"Where are you going?"

"To town, to be fitted for the Country Club ball on the tenth," she replied with suppressed belligerence.

"Don't you think you might manage with one of the five evening gowns you have had this season?"

"I could if it were a fancy dress ball and I wanted to go as King Cophetua's beggar maid. The eleven ten, remember." Mrs. Lawton closed the door behind her as if making her escape from an importunate creditor.

"I think it is disgraceful!" Miss Ellerby cleared her throat. She always hemmed when she mentioned anything disgraceful as if to remove the word with vigor from her system. "Perfectly abominable, the way she acts. One would think she was drawing alimony. Can't you make her husband pay up, Bush?"

"He hasn't the money, poor devil."

"Then he ought to take her back or go to jail. The idea of a man not being able to pay alimony! Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Who ever heard of anybody not having all the money he wants?" He opened the letter at his plate.

"I will say"—Angelica when she argued or became excited always suggested the painful possibility that nervous prostration was near, and that if she were contradicted she would reach out and clasp it to her bosom—"I will say that if we are so poor— But I don't see why we are; nobody else is. You have charge of mother's estate; why don't you make her some money? . . . A trust estate? Well, why don't you go



down to the company and tell them they must give you the principal? . . . They won't do it? Why, I should like to know? . . . She has spent most of her free capital? Well then, all I can say is that if we are so poor, the way you let Catherine waste money is an outrage—an outrage!"

"If she doesn't get what she wants she turns on mother"—he spoke listlessly, without looking up from the mauve pages which had excited his sisters' scorn—"just as you do—just as we all do." He raised his eyes from the letter. "Mother is an old woman. She has only a few more years to live. She has never had any peace or happiness with us. If I can bribe you people not to make her life a hell on earth—which you do make it when you don't get what you want—well, I am going to do it." He put down the letter indifferently and looked at his angry sister. "You know how tender she is, and you all know just how to hurt her. Oh, I include myself. I have seen you girls sit here at this table and discuss, before her, what you would do when you had your money. That means"—a little flicker of anger showed in the ironical eyes—"when she is dead. She would rather give you the money now than know you are waiting for it. Oh, don't protest; I know. As for me, I would shut down on you all, but you would take it out of her, and I couldn't prevent you."

"How dare you talk to me like that, Bushrod Ellerby? How dare you? If you think I am afraid of you, you are mistaken. And let me tell you, I am as tender-hearted as anybody, but I care only for those that deserve it. This family does nothing but insult me from morning till night—just because I was not fool enough to marry some man! And if you dare shut down on my charities I shall go to mother." The flames of her rising anger illumined a vision of trained nurses of the most expensive kind bending over Miss Ellerby. Her brother restrained the words on his lips. But not so Miss Ellerby. "And, furthermore, I—"

"Hush!" He spoke with angry authority. "Here is mother."

"I will not hush. I am the only person in this family who cares for the poor—"

"Children—oh, children!" quavered a frail little voice.

"For the poor dumb animals. You ask anyone in this town who organized the Dumb Beasts' Friendly Shelter—"

"Be quiet!" he cried harshly.

"I will not be quiet. You are not my husband. If it were not for me, Bushrod Ellerby, thousands of poor cats and dogs would be cold and hungry at this minute. And it's an outrage that mother will keep those dock-tailed horses for the brougham instead of selling them and getting a pair that have not been maimed—and forcing me to drive down to the Shelter behind the hideous objects of men's cruelty; and you know well enough she could do it if she wanted to, instead of letting Catherine—"

"Children—children! Oh, me!"

"Letting Catherine spend all the money she ought to be getting in alimony on those terrible clothes she buys. Her taste is the most awful thing. I can't see why mother doesn't assert herself and make her put some lace in the bosom of that scarlet chiffon."

"I suppose you would like to see mother go back to bed with that headache," he cried savagely.

His sister opened her lips, but at the sight of the little black figure with the tremulous hands and the look of blind pain behind the gold-rimmed spectacles, she was silent. She rose and forced the largest and most uncomfortable pillow behind her mother's back; then, becoming absorbed in one of the many thoughts incident to her philanthropies, she poured a cup of coffee and dropped five lumps of sugar into it before she remembered that her mother always took tea at breakfast. The man, knowing that the slightest word would reopen the sluice gates of wrath, rose, took the teapot from before the fire and brought it to the table.

Mrs. Ellerby gazed from brother to sister with sharp anxiety. "Angelica," she said, "where is Thornton?"

"I don't know." Miss Ellerby was just then planning in her mind how to

save the cats that would be left behind when their owners departed for summer vacations. Naturally she was annoyed at the question. "I have no time to be always running after men."

"Now I hope"—the little old lady glanced from brother to sister tremulously—"I hope that you were not harsh with him. It is not the poor boy's fault," she added, as she saw the sudden anger in both faces. "Oh, children, when a thing is done, it is done. Let us make the best of it; others will make the worst."

"Oh, always excuses for the men!" Miss Ellerby tossed the cats from her mind and gave battle. "If you had had proper firmness in raising him it would never have happened. He is disgracing us all; and you, and you alone, are to blame for it. You never did anything but indulge the boys, and now you are paying for it. And mark my words, you will continue to pay for it."

"A man from the Shelter wants to see you, Miss Angelica," said the elderly maid from the doorway.

Miss Ellerby sprang up, a look of pity and alarm in her fine eyes. "Oh, I wonder if that poor little dog died in the night? Oh, why didn't I sit up with him and give him his nourishment? If he is dead I shall never forgive myself—never, never!" Deeply concerned, she ran from the room.

The son looked at the mother. Among the wrinkles of the face before him were still some wistful traces of its pretty and sheltered youth. His mother always brought to his mind the image of a tiny Southern bird tossed by Northern winds and beaten about by wing and claw of the brood that fate had ironically given her. His strong, slender hand touched the frail old one. "Poor little mother, how we all treat you!" The ironical eyes softened.

"My dear, it is my fault; what she just said is true. But I pray that God will let me suffer for my mistakes and not visit the punishment on you all. If your father had only lived it would have been so different. Things went so smoothly while he lived."

"Oh, don't talk to me of my father."

"Oh, son!" The wrinkled face was all soft and shocked.

"I mean it," said the other roughly. "He never gave you the slightest help or guidance while he lived. He provided all the money you wanted, but where he got it or how he took care of it was none of your business. Then he died and left you as helpless as a baby."

"You must not speak that way. He always thought he would outlive me. He was so big and strong."

"No man has a right to think like that. Yes, mother, I will say it. And no man has a right to marry a woman and treat her like a doll he has bought."

"Bush dear, you must not talk like that. Things went so well while he lived. And oh, I have made so many mistakes."

"You did your best," he said impatiently; "but father left us all his temper and will. The only thing I blame you for is that you did not give us some of your heart." As if ashamed of his tenderness, he turned brusquely to his paper. Presently he felt the soft touch of her lips on his hair. Looking up in surprise, he found that she had risen and was standing beside him.

"My dear," she said, "your father was tender and sweet deep down where few could see it; and so are you, my dear son."

"Nonsense," he said, with instinctive shrinking from all demonstration. "It is the injustice of the thing I think of." He took her hand from his shoulder. "Where are your rings?"

"I am too old for diamonds. I gave them to the girls. They would have them eventually, anyway. What does a year or so matter?"

"Mother, you make me angry."

"Oh, if you had put that telephone in the Shelter I could have been there hours ago!" Miss Ellerby cried, flinging open the door and revealing her tragic person hatted and cloaked and quivering with emotion.

"How is the little dog?" asked Mrs. Ellerby.

"Going fast. Give me the key to the liquor case, Bush. Hurry! Oh, those men! I know they drank what I left

for him." In a flurry of denunciation she swept to the closet.

"Angelica," said her mother, "can't you stop on your way back and ask poor Mrs. Ryan what we can do? They tell me her husband is suffering terribly with that leg the train crushed."

"I haven't time. Tom Ryan has a tongue and can ask for what he wants, but the poor, suffering, dumb little dog—oh, I must hurry!"

The man banged his fist on the table. "That woman drives me crazy!" he shouted.

The mother did not answer. She glanced about the big room at the old familiar things that had seen her happy and sheltered life when her dear husband had stood between her and the world. Nothing was changed from that bygone time of peace. The wide carved sideboard still held her wedding silver. The curtains between which she had so often watched for his coming still hung in long accustomed folds. She drew near to her oldest son. "Dear," she said painfully, "I want to speak to you about Thornton."

## II

THE man's eyes changed from impatience to anger. The mother hurriedly met the change. "Remember that he has no father," she pleaded. "If his father had lived, Thornton would never have gone the way he has."

"That disgraceful drunk—"

"It was all Harry Wilkes's fault—his and Carter Boyd's. They are such dissipated young men. They induced Thornton to go with them—I know they did. They are a danger to the community. I can't understand how their fathers allow them to behave as they do."

"I know the whole story. I am waiting now to tell Thornton what I think of him."

"He can't help it—poor Thornton. He is like his Uncle Bushrod."

"Are we never to escape from Uncle Bushrod?" cried the man.

"Now, Bush dear, when you speak to Thornton be gentle. Remember, he has the family temper."

"The devil!" The expletive showed that the family temper was not the exclusive property of the younger Ellerby.

"My son, you have sworn before a lady." His mother's face expressed a deeper, graver disapproval than when she had spoken of the moral lapse of her younger boy. In her code moral lapses were regrettable, but, like a nose or hands, one got them from one's ancestors. Conventions, however, were a personal responsibility.

"I beg your pardon, mother," he hastened to say, "but—but Thornton will not listen to me. I have told him a thousand times to let that crowd at the Country Club alone."

She seated herself and looked out the window. Presently she turned to him with a quickened interest. "I wish we could send him away."

"There is no money. This place takes all you have and all my salary. You're in debt to the eyes now, without a chance of raising a cent until next quarter day, if then."

"I would give it up—I would live anywhere thankfully if the children would be happy."

"I can see you and the girls in an apartment! The truth is, mother, that you can't live away from the girls, and they won't live anywhere except here. They run this house and you and me, and they know their power. For absolute unadulterated horror, give me living with a woman who can't and won't economize. She not only wants to eat her cake and have it but looks upon any bread that is offered her as though it were poison. No, we might as well realize that what the girls want they will have. They will find in the end that it has come out of their own pockets, but—well, pockets have gone out of fashion with women, so they don't care. As for Thornton, I have been trying to get him into Dixon's office, but I suppose this last affair will quash that."

"I shall go and see James Dixon myself. His mother was my seamstress when I first came here."

"If you think that will soften his heart, you are mistaken. Please leave me to handle this."

Little Mrs. Ellerby sighed with resignation and poured her tea. There was evidently some further cause for worry upon her mind. From her glances at the man's head bent above his newspaper the trouble this time concerned her eldest son. Presently she summoned her courage and spoke. "Bush, Elinor wrote me that she had such a pleasant time on Long Island."

"H'm," said the son from the depths of his paper.

"She writes that she met such an attractive girl—everyone is charmed with her." After a little pause she said: "Her name is Miss Manson." The reading continued. "Elinor said that you knew her."

"Oh, yes." The indifferent tone was balm to the mother's troubled soul. "I know her. She is on all the fences."

"An actress?" Mrs. Ellerby belonged to a generation that pronounced the word as if it were spelled "murderess."

"No—Manson's Lard. 'This size one dollar.'"

"Oh, I am so glad!" To his enormous astonishment his mother's hand rested on his.

"What is the matter?"

"Because"—the relief in the little lady's eyes was that which is seen only in the eyes of mothers when told that their sons are not going to marry—"because I know that you would not speak like that of a lady you thought of courting." He laughed. "Of course I want you to marry, Bush—of course; but I want you to marry a lady."

"Mother, you are old-fashioned. We have only women nowadays, and they resent being called ladies. That title went out with book muslin and waterfalls. Even our best sellers never mention it."

Little Mrs. Ellerby ruffled like an annoyed meadow lark. "I cannot understand these Northern people." Having lived only fifty years in the North, of course she could not be expected to do so. "I cannot understand them. They want blood in their horses, in their dogs, even in their chickens—in everything but their wives."

He laughed again, and the face he

turned to his mother was boyish in its whimsical affection. "Little Southerner, you belong 'before the War.' But make your mind easy; I care not for ladies whose family names are on fences. Though that is unjust to the girl. I liked her. She is the breezy, open air kind, and has a sense of humor. I showed her over the fences at Meadowbrook, or rather, started to, but she showed me. However, rest easy, for I am not in love with her and never shall be."

The door opened and the elderly maid strode in and took a position of command before her frail mistress. "The butcher is here, ma'am."

The announcement threw little Mrs. Ellerby into a helpless flutter. "Bush—oh dear," she mourned, "I forgot to order! What do you want for dinner, Bush?"

"Don't worry me about what I want for dinner when I am at breakfast," he replied, frowning.

"You hadn't oughter speak to your mother like that, Mr. Bush," said the maid with great severity.

"Will you ever realize, Bridget, that I have grown up?"

"Realize it yourself, then I will." She turned majestically to her shrinking mistress.

"I think a leg of lamb would be nice. Don't you, Bush? Don't you, Bridget?" fluttered the helpless head of the house.

"Excuse me, ma'am"—the wide mouth of the maid set firmly—"excuse me, but after the way Miss Catherine spoke about the leg you had Monday, I don't think Nora could look a jint in the face without breakin' down."

"Oh, I must go and explain to Nora that Catherine didn't mean to hurt her feelings." Little Mrs. Ellerby strove to rise, but a wave of a mighty red hand seemed to force her back into the arm-chair.

"No, ma'am. Nora told me to tell you you was not to come into the kitchen because she has just drawn the fire an' you might ketch cold. How would a nice cut of beef do, ma'am?"

"Yes, very nicely, indeed." Mrs. Ellerby embraced the beef as if it were

tardily proffered salvation from all the difficulties of this life.

The maid gave no attention to her mistress's acquiescence but fixed relentless eyes upon the man. "This room is cold. Mr. Bush, pull your mother's shawl around her."

With the startled obedience of the detected small boy he sprang up and adjusted the lace shawl. Mrs. Ellerby's children obeyed her or not, as they chose, but Bridget's shafts could pierce the stoutest armor of selfishness, and she had a mighty arm with which to cast them. Having issued her directions, she strode to the door. There she paused and announced: "Two fellers is outside to see you, Mr. Bush. They say it's a matter of importance, but Nora is peeking through the library door to see that it ain't the spoons."

"This is simply abominable! Why didn't you tell me before?" he cried.

"Because they ain't the kind that is to be told about before."

His annoyance faded into a laugh of resignation. His laugh was one of his assets, and even the gray-haired Bridget unbent a little. Seeing his opening, he ventured: "Bridget, tell Mr. Thornton I want to see him, and tell the men that I am coming at once."

"Yes, Mr. Bush," she replied. "An' if you want any help to put 'em out, just call me an' Nora." Having thus provided against the importunities of creditors, she withdrew.

Ellerby rose and threw aside the paper and the mauve letter. He touched his mother on the shoulder and went out. Scarcely had the door closed behind him when another was dashed open, and Mrs. Lawton, excessively tailor made and vigorous, entered. Mrs. Lawton gave the impression when entering a room that the walls were put to their utmost resistance to confine her abounding personality.

"What are you doing out of bed?" she said, without a glance at her mother. "You will kill yourself if you are not more careful." This to the window through which she was looking down the drive. "Has Bush ordered the trap?"

"I don't know, Catherine."

"No sign of the trap!" Mrs. Lawton swallowed her wrath, but it rose again immediately in a steady stream of words defying punctuation with its increasing force and velocity. "I just knew that he would forget it—I knew it! I think it is perfectly disgraceful the way this house is run—no system, no order; everything higglety-pigglety. The front drive is a disgrace, and when are you going to have the paper replaced in my room? It is just like living in a charity ward of an orphan asylum with blisters and strips hanging down—" A gasp for breath. "For goodness sake, if we *are* as poor as rats, wallpaper costs nothing. I should think that you would be ashamed to have guests come in this house and see the condition it is in; if you have no natural pride, at least you should regard what people say of us—" Here more breath was necessary, but the sight of Thornton Ellerby, who entered, pale, sullen and dogged, seemed to serve in place of breath, and she resumed torrentially: "But no; the men get everything and the girls get nothing. You make a perfect idol of the men. You simply cannot say no to them; and how do they repay you? Bush cares nothing how the house looks, and Thornton is disgracing us all—"

"Oh, always on the clack! Good Lord, can't a fellow turn around in this house without hearing a hen? It is sickening," cried the boy. "If I were mother I would stop it!"

"If I were mother I would soon stop your—"

"Children! Children!" Little Mrs. Ellerby's voice came to the surface of the whirlpool surging over her head much as the face of a swimmer appears for a second among the rapids and then is instantly submerged.

"It is not your money!" cried Mrs. Lawton.

"Nor yours!" shouted Thornton.

"I should think you would not dare to speak after last night."

"Oh, be quiet!"

"I won't be quiet—for you or anyone else. You think because you can twist mother around your finger that you can—"





*HERO AND LEANDER*

*From the painting made for The Smart Set Magazine by André Castaigne*

# THE SMART SET

*Its Prime Purpose is to Provide Lively Entertainment  
For Minds That Are Not Primitive*

## A PAID HUSBAND

By Forrest Halsey

"KILL mother, will I?" The pallor of last night's dissipation disappeared in the flame of the morning's anger as the boy sprang to his feet. "What about your getting divorced, and all our names in the paper?" Mrs. Catherine Lawton drew herself up. "And *your* having nervous prostration until you got the money out of mother for the animal shelter?" Miss Ellerby drew herself up. "And the both of you spending money hand over fist, when you know well enough she hasn't got it? You both nearly killed her last week over that dance. You know she had to give a note for the money."

"She did the same for your college debts."

"Why don't you get a position and help her?"

"Damn it, ain't I tryin' to get one?"

"Don't swear; it is disgusting."

"You are so common."

"Can I go into Bott's shoe store?" cried the lad passionately, tears in his eyes, rage in his voice. "Or get the butcher to let me drive a wagon? I'm training for the law, and I have got to go into a law office."

"Well, you needn't get drunk."

"Or get arrested."

"I don't care if I did get arrested."

"Well, we care—seeing the family name in the police court."

"Ah, I suppose the only respectable court for the family to appear in is the divorce court!"

"Well, it is far more proper than the police court."

"Why don't you go for Bush? He gets soused."

"He doesn't get into the papers," said Miss Ellerby.

"Your language is disgusting," said Mrs. Lawton.

"Darn this family! A lot of old hens!" A napkin was cast violently among the breakfast silver and the door slammed behind the youngest of the house of Ellerby.

For a moment there was silence in the big sun-filled room. The dim family portraits smirked from chipped and tarnished frames upon the two women at the table. Doubtless the smiling imperturbability of the portraits, belonging as it did to a bygone time of good breeding, helped them to disregard the lack of it in their descendants. Not that the Ellerbys, judged by the modern standard, lacked breeding—far from it; but their day had seen fit to mark their class with absence of artificiality, as it had marked their forebears with it. Though it is to be doubted if even in the day of

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steinkirks and rose pink coats family quarrels were distinguished by the niceties of the drawing room or dueling field.

Catherine Lawton looked at the closed door, then at her sister. "I suppose," she said placidly, "we must make up our minds that Thornton will be another drunkard like Uncle Bushrod." She spoke as if she were saying that they must resign themselves not to have the drawing room done over that year.

"We always have everything in our family," replied Miss Ellerby with fretful despair.

"Meaning a divorcée?" Mrs. Lawton gave her strict attention to her sister's abundant but carelessly dressed hair. "Turn your head a little more to the window, Angelica."

"What is it?" said the unwary Angelica.

"H'm—is that the light, or is it more gray hairs I see?"

"It is the gray hairs you have commented upon ever since you came home. Is the room too warm, Catherine? Your face is so flushed."

"It is not a flush; it is rouge. I will not look like the yolk of an egg in the morning," placidly returned Mrs. Lawton.

"I should think that you would be afraid of men speaking to you on the street."

"Well, I always like to feel that they would if they dared."

"Thank goodness, my life is not spent in thinking about men," said Angelica.

"Your life is singularly free from any worry of that sort," said her sister, exploring a covered dish.

"However"—Miss Ellerby buttered a roll—"if I decided to take one, I should try to keep him."

"My dear"—Mrs. Lawton's tone was that which is bestowed at the altar and is marked "for married women only"—"you know nothing about it. You have never been given the opportunity of knowing whether you could keep a man or not."

"Every woman can always marry if she is not particular." Miss Ellerby spoke with calmness, but tore a roll as if it were one of the hated sex.

"My dear Angelica," spoke Mrs. Lawton, wrapped in matrimony as in a mantle of wisdom, "that remark is made by every unmarried woman, but when a woman gets 'Mrs.' on her name, no matter how, there is no possibility of mistaking the fact that some man has cared for her. Otherwise she can talk until she is black in the face and no one will believe her." She allowed her attention to become absorbed in the reflection of her "smart" figure and tight, smooth head as presented for her approbation in the mirror above the sideboard. Catherine Lawton at forty looked as if she had been created by a good heavenly tailor and handed over to one of the best earthly ones to clothe.

"Pardon me if I do not devote all the time that I should be eating breakfast to the discussion of how unattractive I am," said the elder sister with icy fretfulness.

The firing died out along the lines of battle at the appearance between the combatants of an elderly parlor maid bearing the mail. Mrs. Lawton asserted her precedence as a married woman by taking the letters. The elderly maid yielded them with an obvious reluctance significant of the position which her years of service in the family had given her. As she left the room her back expressed a hot displeasure, prevented from boiling into speech only by the removal of her person from inflammable proximities.

"Bills, bills, bills!" The oblong envelopes flew from the plump ringed hands onto the tablecloth. "I should think mother would be ashamed not to pay them."

"Celeste was positively rude about my new hat." Evidently from Miss Ellerby's modified tone here was a common ground of attack where forces could be united without prejudice to later engagements.

"Why doesn't mother sell something and pay them? I think it is common to be always meeting tradespeople in the hall." Suddenly Mrs. Lawton's tone took a more vivid tint of interest; she held up a mauve envelope. "She has written to him again. Look at it! Raw .

purple—enough to set your teeth on edge!”

“Bush says she is very rich,” said the interested Angelica.

“Judging from her stationery, she is the kind of creature who is broken out with diamonds like a nettle rash.”

“She will never get him,” said the other with finality. “Bush is too particular.”

“Imagine having stationery like that in the family!” The offending envelope was laid beside a plate; Mrs. Lawton’s gesture was that of one putting a contaminated garment upon the fire. She became absorbed in her mail. Suddenly she started violently. From her birth she had done all things with suddenness or violence. “Listen!” she cried. “Elinor has met her; she is staying with her at the Mason-Willings’.” Mrs. Lawton cleared her throat and read:

“The rich Miss Manson came Saturday. She wore at the ball a gown—no, a dress—adorned with bunches of—well, wampum is as near as I can describe it, and had cascades of pearls thundering down the front of her, and explosions of spangles all over the back of her.”

Mrs. Lawton swallowed violently. “Think,” she cried—“*think* of creatures like that having money for clothes! They would be just as happy in a gunny-sack.” She returned to the letter.

“Evie Grenfell has had her with her, and proposed her along with herself for the Mason-Willings’.”

“That is where Bush met her—at the Grenfells’,” interjected Angelica.

The other continued, reading feverishly:

“And from what Evie said, Bush certainly slipped her a steer.”

“What does she mean? Elinor has grown so vulgar since she married.”

“Oh, she is trying to be like that common, slangy husband of hers. How she can bear him! I don’t care if he is a Fosdick; he is as common as kraut. I do think this family and its connections are the homeliest lot. I will say one thing for my ‘ex’—he stood out in a crowd.”

“I should think you would be ashamed to mention his name,” said the other.

“I would rather talk about him than

do as you do about Wouter Van Winner-coup,” retorted the matron.

“He did propose to me.” A faint red showed in Miss Ellerby’s cheeks. For a moment she looked handsome in spite of the disarray and lack-care look of her whole person. Evidently long ago Miss Ellerby had been a pretty girl.

“I don’t dispute it,” replied Catherine wearily; “I was too young to know.”

“He did.”

“Do stop talking about a man who has been married for twenty years.”

Miss Ellerby opened her lips to speak, but the impulse died and she sat silent.

“Listen,” cried Mrs. Lawton again from the depths of the letter:

“Evie says the heiress is crazy about Bush. When she was introduced to me and heard I was his sister, she turned scarlet. Later she actually tried to paw me.”

“He got a package from Long Island yesterday,” interjected the elder sister.

“She has worked him a pair of carpet slippers,” replied the other as she returned to the letter. Once more she gave a start, this time with sufficient violence to unsettle the seemingly solid architecture of her back hair. “She is coming here!” she cried.

“Who—Elinor?”

“Both of them.”

“You can’t mean it!”

“It is here in black and white. They will stop by on their way from the race—they are to be at the Wilkeses’. She is following him up.”

“That means,” said Angelica, with bitter resignation to the imbecility of her sex, “that Bush has kissed her. He always does. He says that no introduction is complete without it. If he goes on kissing strange women, he will get in trouble some day.”

“Well”—the tight gown of the one crowned with matrimony creaked as she drew herself to heights of disgust—“that Elinor Fosdick can’t fool me, if she is my sister. She got the creature that invitation to the Wilkeses’. Charlotte Wilkes would never, *never* have thought of inviting her if Elinor had not put her up to it. Elinor is so mercenary. She is trying to catch Bush for that horror. Well, I, for one, will not lend a

hand to the disgraceful proceeding. And if that woman comes to this house, I will show her—" She became rigid and gave a practised glare at her sister, much as a star may rehearse her best scenes with an understudy in the absence of the villain. "But," she continued, too absorbed to note the opening of the door behind her, "I do not believe that Bush would do such a thing. He has too much refinement to marry a woman all broken out with diamonds."

"Where is mother?" asked the man who seated himself at the breakfast table. His sisters regarded him with startled unease.

As Mrs. Lawton said, Bushrod Ellerby had refinement. Whatever coarser inner fibers there might be in the man—and if reports of his life were true they existed—did not show on the surface. In a society essentially amorphous, he was conspicuous by the look of race selection, by bearing the impress of a definite blood and indefinite impulses and ideals, which we misterm but epitomize in the word "aristocratic." His dark, fine head, the clearly modeled features, his height, gave him a distinction, an air of race. The ironical eyes and slightly cynical lips stamped him with that kinship which relates the man of the world to his brother of the world everywhere, regardless of nationality. As they sat at their breakfast table the Ellerbys represented in an amusing degree the American family claiming "aristocracy." They had in their family tree some splendid names, historical both in their own country and in England. Like other "old families," they recognized only the distinguished names with which they were connected, and ignored the humble women, bondservants, with whom the male bearers of those names had propagated their race in the new country to which the younger sons had come as *conquistadores*. The Ellerby tree, like its kindred in the forests of the New World, resembled a crowded harbor in a fog, in that there was much obscurity illuminated by occasional bright lights. Humble ancestors, ignore them as we will, still have a good deal of the persistence of the poor relation;

and the strong, florid humble women of the past were present at that table in the person of the highly colored and very "smart" Mrs. Lawton, as the cavaliers were present in the person of the man who, with a careless glance at the address on the mauve-missive beside his plate, turned to the elder sister and repeated:

"Where is mother?"

"She has one of her headaches."

"Bush"—Mrs. Lawton sprang to her feet—"I want the trap for the eleven ten train."

"Where are you going?"

"To town, to be fitted for the Country Club ball on the tenth," she replied with suppressed belligerence.

"Don't you think you might manage with one of the five evening gowns you have had this season?"

"I could if it were a fancy dress ball and I wanted to go as King Cophetua's beggar maid. The eleven ten, remember." Mrs. Lawton closed the door behind her as if making her escape from an importunate creditor.

"I think it is disgraceful!" Miss Ellerby cleared her throat. She always hemmed when she mentioned anything disgraceful as if to remove the word with vigor from her system. "Perfectly abominable, the way she acts. One would think she was drawing alimony. Can't you make her husband pay up, Bush?"

"He hasn't the money, poor devil."

"Then he ought to take her back or go to jail. The idea of a man not being able to pay alimony! Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"Who ever heard of anybody not having all the money he wants?" He opened the letter at his plate.

"I will say"—Angelica when she argued or became excited always suggested the painful possibility that nervous prostration was near, and that if she were contradicted she would reach out and clasp it to her bosom—"I will say that if we are so poor— But I don't see why we are; nobody else is. You have charge of mother's estate; why don't you make her some money? . . . A trust estate? Well, why don't you go



down to the company and tell them they must give you the principal? . . . They won't do it? Why, I should like to know? . . . She has spent most of her free capital? Well then, all I can say is that if we are so poor, the way you let Catherine waste money is an outrage—an *outrage!*"

"If she doesn't get what she wants she turns on mother"—he spoke listlessly, without looking up from the mauve pages which had excited his sisters' scorn—"just as you do—just as we all do." He raised his eyes from the letter. "Mother is an old woman. She has only a few more years to live. She has never had any peace or happiness with us. If I can bribe you people not to make her life a hell on earth—which you do make it when you don't get what you want—well, I am going to do it." He put down the letter indifferently and looked at his angry sister. "You know how tender she is, and you all know just how to hurt her. Oh, I include myself. I have seen you girls sit here at this table and discuss, before her, what you would do when you had your money. That means"—a little flicker of anger showed in the ironical eyes—"when she is dead. She would rather give you the money now than know you are waiting for it. Oh, don't protest; I know. As for me, I would shut down on you all, but you would take it out of her, and I couldn't prevent you."

"How dare you talk to me like that, Bushrod Ellerby? How dare you? If you think I am afraid of you, you are mistaken. And let me tell you, I am as tender-hearted as anybody, but I care only for those that deserve it. This family does nothing but insult me from morning till night—just because I was not fool enough to marry some man! And if you dare shut down on my charities I shall go to mother." The flames of her rising anger illumined a vision of trained nurses of the most expensive kind bending over Miss Ellerby. Her brother restrained the words on his lips. But not so Miss Ellerby. "And, furthermore, I—"

"Hush!" He spoke with angry authority. "Here is mother."

"I will not hush. I am the only person in this family who cares for the poor—"

"Children—oh, children!" quavered a frail little voice.

"For the poor dumb animals. You ask anyone in this town who organized the Dumb Beasts' Friendly Shelter—"

"Be quiet!" he cried harshly.

"I will not be quiet. You are not my husband. If it were not for me, Bushrod Ellerby, thousands of poor cats and dogs would be cold and hungry at this minute. And it's an outrage that mother will keep those dock-tailed horses for the brougham instead of selling them and getting a pair that have not been maimed—and forcing me to drive down to the Shelter behind the hideous objects of men's cruelty; and you know well enough she could do it if she wanted to, instead of letting Catherine—"

"Children—children! Oh, me!"

"Letting Catherine spend all the money she ought to be getting in alimony on those terrible clothes she buys. Her taste is the most awful thing. I can't see why mother doesn't assert herself and make her put some lace in the bosom of that scarlet chiffon."

"I suppose you would like to see mother go back to bed with that headache," he cried savagely.

His sister opened her lips, but at the sight of the little black figure with the tremulous hands and the look of blind pain behind the gold-rimmed spectacles, she was silent. She rose and forced the largest and most uncomfortable pillow behind her mother's back; then, becoming absorbed in one of the many thoughts incident to her philanthropies, she poured a cup of coffee and dropped five lumps of sugar into it before she remembered that her mother always took tea at breakfast. The man, knowing that the slightest word would reopen the sluice gates of wrath, rose, took the teapot from before the fire and brought it to the table.

Mrs. Ellerby gazed from brother to sister with sharp anxiety. "Angelica," she said, "where is Thornton?"

"I don't know." Miss Ellerby was just then planning in her mind how to

save the cats that would be left behind when their owners departed for summer vacations. Naturally she was annoyed at the question. "I have no time to be always running after men."

"Now I hope"—the little old lady glanced from brother to sister tremulously—"I hope that you were not harsh with him. It is not the poor boy's fault," she added, as she saw the sudden anger in both faces. "Oh, children, when a thing is done, it is done. Let us make the best of it; others will make the worst."

"Oh, always excuses for the men!" Miss Ellerby tossed the cats from her mind and gave battle. "If you had had proper firmness in raising him it would never have happened. He is disgracing us all; and you, and you alone, are to blame for it. You never did anything but indulge the boys, and now you are paying for it. And mark my words, you will continue to pay for it."

"A man from the Shelter wants to see you, Miss Angelica," said the elderly maid from the doorway.

Miss Ellerby sprang up, a look of pity and alarm in her fine eyes. "Oh, I wonder if that poor little dog died in the night? Oh, why didn't I sit up with him and give him his nourishment? If he is dead I shall never forgive myself—never, never!" Deeply concerned, she ran from the room.

The son looked at the mother. Among the wrinkles of the face before him were still some wistful traces of its pretty and sheltered youth. His mother always brought to his mind the image of a tiny Southern bird tossed by Northern winds and beaten about by wing and claw of the brood that fate had ironically given her. His strong, slender hand touched the frail old one. "Poor little mother, how we all treat you!" The ironical eyes softened.

"My dear, it is my fault; what she just said is true. But I pray that God will let me suffer for my mistakes and not visit the punishment on you all. If your father had only lived it would have been so different. Things went so smoothly while he lived."

"Oh, don't talk to me of my father."

"Oh, son!" The wrinkled face was all soft and shocked.

"I mean it," said the other roughly. "He never gave you the slightest help or guidance while he lived. He provided all the money you wanted, but where he got it or how he took care of it was none of your business. Then he died and left you as helpless as a baby."

"You must not speak that way. He always thought he would outlive me. He was so big and strong."

"No man has a right to think like that. Yes, mother, I will say it. And no man has a right to marry a woman and treat her like a doll he has bought."

"Bush dear, you must not talk like that. Things went so well while he lived. And oh, I have made so many mistakes."

"You did your best," he said impatiently; "but father left us all his temper and will. The only thing I blame you for is that you did not give us some of your heart." As if ashamed of his tenderness, he turned brusquely to his paper. Presently he felt the soft touch of her lips on his hair. Looking up in surprise, he found that she had risen and was standing beside him.

"My dear," she said, "your father was tender and sweet deep down where few could see it; and so are you, my dear son."

"Nonsense," he said, with instinctive shrinking from all demonstration. "It is the injustice of the thing I think of." He took her hand from his shoulder. "Where are your rings?"

"I am too old for diamonds. I gave them to the girls. They would have them eventually, anyway. What does a year or so matter?"

"Mother, you make me angry."

"Oh, if you had put that telephone in the Shelter I could have been there hours ago!" Miss Ellerby cried, flinging open the door and revealing her tragic person hatted and cloaked and quivering with emotion.

"How is the little dog?" asked Mrs. Ellerby.

"Going fast. Give me the key to the liquor case, Bush. Hurry! Oh, those men! I know they drank what I left

for him." In a flurry of denunciation she swept to the closet.

"Angelica," said her mother, "can't you stop on your way back and ask poor Mrs. Ryan what we can do? They tell me her husband is suffering terribly with that leg the train crushed."

"I haven't time. Tom Ryan has a tongue and can ask for what he wants, but the poor, suffering, dumb little dog—oh, I must hurry!"

The man banged his fist on the table. "That woman drives me crazy!" he shouted.

The mother did not answer. She glanced about the big room at the old familiar things that had seen her happy and sheltered life when her dear husband had stood between her and the world. Nothing was changed from that bygone time of peace. The wide carved sideboard still held her wedding silver. The curtains between which she had so often watched for his coming still hung in long accustomed folds. She drew near to her oldest son. "Dear," she said painfully, "I want to speak to you about Thornton."

## II

THE man's eyes changed from impatience to anger. The mother hurriedly met the change. "Remember that he has no father," she pleaded. "If his father had lived, Thornton would never have gone the way he has."

"That disgraceful drunk—"

"It was all Harry Wilkes's fault—his and Carter Boyd's. They are such dissipated young men. They induced Thornton to go with them—I know they did. They are a danger to the community. I can't understand how their fathers allow them to behave as they do."

"I know the whole story. I am waiting now to tell Thornton what I think of him."

"He can't help it—poor Thornton. He is like his Uncle Bushrod."

"Are we never to escape from Uncle Bushrod?" cried the man.

"Now, Bush dear, when you speak to Thornton be gentle. Remember, he has the family temper."

"The devil!" The expletive showed that the family temper was not the exclusive property of the younger Ellerby.

"My son, you have sworn before a lady." His mother's face expressed a deeper, graver disapproval than when she had spoken of the moral lapse of her younger boy. In her code moral lapses were regrettable, but, like a nose or hands, one got them from one's ancestors. Conventions, however, were a personal responsibility.

"I beg your pardon, mother," he hastened to say, "but—but Thornton will not listen to me. I have told him a thousand times to let that crowd at the Country Club alone."

She seated herself and looked out the window. Presently she turned to him with a quickened interest. "I wish we could send him away."

"There is no money. This place takes all you have and all my salary. You're in debt to the eyes now, without a chance of raising a cent until next quarter day, if then."

"I would give it up—I would live anywhere thankfully if the children would be happy."

"I can see you and the girls in an apartment! The truth is, mother, that you can't live away from the girls, and they won't live anywhere except here. They run this house and you and me, and they know their power. For absolute unadulterated horror, give me living with a woman who can't and won't economize. She not only wants to eat her cake and have it but looks upon any bread that is offered her as though it were poison. No, we might as well realize that what the girls want they will have. They will find in the end that it has come out of their own pockets, but—well, pockets have gone out of fashion with women, so they don't care. As for Thornton, I have been trying to get him into Dixon's office, but I suppose this last affair will quash that."

"I shall go and see James Dixon myself. His mother was my seamstress when I first came here."

"If you think that will soften his heart, you are mistaken. Please leave me to handle this."

Little Mrs. Ellerby sighed with resignation and poured her tea. There was evidently some further cause for worry upon her mind. From her glances at the man's head bent above his newspaper the trouble this time concerned her eldest son. Presently she summoned her courage and spoke. "Bush, Elinor wrote me that she had such a pleasant time on Long Island."

"H'm," said the son from the depths of his paper.

"She writes that she met such an attractive girl—everyone is charmed with her." After a little pause she said: "Her name is Miss Manson." The reading continued. "Elinor said that you knew her."

"Oh, yes." The indifferent tone was balm to the mother's troubled soul. "I know her. She is on all the fences."

"An actress?" Mrs. Ellerby belonged to a generation that pronounced the word as if it were spelled "murderess."

"No—Manson's Lard. 'This size one dollar.'"

"Oh, I am so glad!" To his enormous astonishment his mother's hand rested on his.

"What is the matter?"

"Because"—the relief in the little lady's eyes was that which is seen only in the eyes of mothers when told that their sons are not going to marry—"because I know that you would not speak like that of a lady you thought of courting." He laughed. "Of course I want you to marry, Bush—of course; but I want you to marry a lady."

"Mother, you are old-fashioned. We have only women nowadays, and they resent being called ladies. That title went out with book muslin and waterfalls. Even our best sellers never mention it."

Little Mrs. Ellerby ruffled like an annoyed meadow lark. "I cannot understand these Northern people." Having lived only fifty years in the North, of course she could not be expected to do so. "I cannot understand them. They want blood in their horses, in their dogs, even in their chickens—in everything but their wives."

He laughed again, and the face he

turned to his mother was boyish in its whimsical affection. "Little Southerner, you belong 'before the War.' But make your mind easy; I care not for ladies whose family names are on fences. Though that is unjust to the girl. I liked her. She is the breezy, open air kind, and has a sense of humor. I showed her over the fences at Meadowbrook, or rather, started to, but she showed me. However, rest easy, for I am not in love with her and never shall be."

The door opened and the elderly maid strode in and took a position of command before her frail mistress. "The butcher is here, ma'am."

The announcement threw little Mrs. Ellerby into a helpless flutter. "Bush—oh dear," she mourned, "I forgot to order! What do you want for dinner, Bush?"

"Don't worry me about what I want for dinner when I am at breakfast," he replied, frowning.

"You hadn't oughter speak to your mother like that, Mr. Bush," said the maid with great severity.

"Will you ever realize, Bridget, that I have grown up?"

"Realize it yourself, then I will." She turned majestically to her shrinking mistress.

"I think a leg of lamb would be nice. Don't you, Bush? Don't you, Bridget?" fluttered the helpless head of the house.

"Excuse me, ma'am"—the wide mouth of the maid set firmly—"excuse me, but after the way Miss Catherine spoke about the leg you had Monday, I don't think Nora could look a jint in the face without breakin' down."

"Oh, I must go and explain to Nora that Catherine didn't mean to hurt her feelings." Little Mrs. Ellerby strove to rise, but a wave of a mighty red hand seemed to force her back into the arm-chair.

"No, ma'am. Nora told me to tell you you was not to come into the kitchen because she has just drawed the fire an' you might ketch cold. How would a nice cut of beef do, ma'am?"

"Yes, very nicely, indeed." Mrs. Ellerby embraced the beef as if it were

tardily proffered salvation from all the difficulties of this life.

The maid gave no attention to her mistress's acquiescence but fixed relentless eyes upon the man. "This room is cold. Mr. Bush, pull your mother's shawl around her."

With the startled obedience of the detected small boy he sprang up and adjusted the lace shawl. Mrs. Ellerby's children obeyed her or not, as they chose, but Bridget's shafts could pierce the stoutest armor of selfishness, and she had a mighty arm with which to cast them. Having issued her directions, she strode to the door. There she paused and announced: "Two fellers is outside to see you, Mr. Bush. They say it's a matter of importance, but Nora is peeking through the library door to see that it ain't the spoons."

"This is simply abominable! Why didn't you tell me before?" he cried.

"Because they ain't the kind that is to be told about before."

His annoyance faded into a laugh of resignation. His laugh was one of his assets, and even the gray-haired Bridget unbent a little. Seeing his opening, he ventured: "Bridget, tell Mr. Thornton I want to see him, and tell the men that I am coming at once."

"Yes, Mr. Bush," she replied. "An' if you want any help to put 'em out, just call me an' Nora." Having thus provided against the importunities of creditors, she withdrew.

Ellerby rose and threw aside the paper and the mauve letter. He touched his mother on the shoulder and went out. Scarcely had the door closed behind him when another was dashed open, and Mrs. Lawton, excessively tailor made and vigorous, entered. Mrs. Lawton gave the impression when entering a room that the walls were put to their utmost resistance to confine her abounding personality.

"What are you doing out of bed?" she said, without a glance at her mother. "You will kill yourself if you are not more careful." This to the window through which she was looking down the drive. "Has Bush ordered the trap?"

"I don't know, Catherine."

"No sign of the trap!" Mrs. Lawton swallowed her wrath, but it rose again immediately in a steady stream of words defying punctuation with its increasing force and velocity. "I just knew that he would forget it—I knew it! I think it is perfectly disgraceful the way this house is run—no system, no order; everything higglety-pigglety. The front drive is a disgrace, and when are you going to have the paper replaced in my room? It is just like living in a charity ward of an orphan asylum with blisters and strips hanging down—" A gasp for breath. "For goodness sake, if we *are* as poor as rats, wallpaper costs nothing. I should think that you would be ashamed to have guests come in this house and see the condition it is in; if you have no natural pride, at least you should regard what people say of us—" Here more breath was necessary, but the sight of Thornton Ellerby, who entered, pale, sullen and dogged, seemed to serve in place of breath, and she resumed torrentially: "But no; the men get everything and the girls get nothing. You make a perfect idol of the men. You simply cannot say no to them; and how do they repay you? Bush cares nothing how the house looks, and Thornton is disgracing us all—"

"Oh, always on the clack! Good Lord, can't a fellow turn around in this house without hearing a hen? It is sickening," cried the boy. "If I were mother I would stop it!"

"If I were mother I would soon stop your—"

"Children! Children!" Little Mrs. Ellerby's voice came to the surface of the whirlpool surging over her head much as the face of a swimmer appears for a second among the rapids and then is instantly submerged.

"It is not your money!" cried Mrs. Lawton.

"Nor yours!" shouted Thornton.

"I should think you would not dare to speak after last night."

"Oh, be quiet!"

"I won't be quiet—for you or anyone else. You think because you can twist mother around your finger that you can—"

"There is the trap," said Mrs. Ellerby as it rounded into view from behind the evergreens.

Mrs. Lawton sped through the door. The boy ran after her. "Stop!" he shouted. "I ordered the trap to go to the club."

"Thornton, wait!" begged his mother.

The bang of the front door had more effect than her words. He ran to the window in time to see his sister seat herself and take the reins from the groom. Casting himself into a chair, he announced: "She is the most selfish woman the Lord ever let live, that Catherine Lawton; and—" Suddenly his voice dropped as he became aware that the little black-clad figure was bowed over the table, her face hidden in the fragile hands on which the veins showed swollen and aged. He flushed, shuffled his feet, then rose and approached her slowly. "Mother," he said, shamed and sullen as he bent over her, "you're not—mother, why, you are crying!" His voice broke and he knelt, taking the little bent figure in his strong young arms. "I don't mean to do these things—like last night—really, really, mother." His face was working and his lips trembled. "I didn't mean to again—after I promised you—but things just seem to happen."

At the tremble in his voice she looked up. She had not been crying, but the faded eyes looked very old and weary; then, as they met the misery of his own, they smiled. "Dear, oh, my dear, mother doesn't blame you." She put her hand on his sleek bright hair. He let his head sink into her lap. His shoulders moved. She touched them gently. The head in her lap looked so young. There was infinite pity and tenderness in her face as she bent over him, and under it all a tragic resignation. A shaft of sunlight falling between the curtains touched his short bright hair with gold, went on across the room and with the same gold lifted the carved leaves on a framed picture—the picture of a handsome young man in the stock and curls of the sixties. The foreign artist had caught well the reckless and cynical mouth and the melancholy contradiction

of the dark eyes. Mrs. Ellerby's eyes went from her son's humbled head to the face on the canvas. For a moment she studied the face shrinkingly, then her head bent above the lowered one, her arms stole about the bowed shoulders and held them close.

At a sound in the hall the lad sprang to his feet and, throwing back head and shoulders, faced the door with returned truculence. In that door stood his elder brother, white, stern and contemptuous.

"I want to speak to you. Mother, I must ask you to leave us," he said quietly.

### III

It is to be doubted whether any crisis lacks heralds of warning any more than a battlefield lacks early fugitives from the thick of conflict to proclaim impending disaster. Mrs. Ellerby knew instantly by the face of her eldest son that something far out of the ordinary menaced her youngest. Heart stabbed by a nameless fear, she stepped between the brothers, who stood gazing at each other with sullen defiance on one side and pitiless contempt on the other. She looked pleadingly at the older.

"Leave us, mother," repeated the man.

With the closing of the door Thornton turned on his brother.

"Now look here," he said with surly anger, "don't you try to lecture me. I won't stand for the elder brother gag from you. Oh, yes, stand there and stare at me as if I were the only sot in the family. Who broke the windows at the hotel after the hunt ball? Who galloped his horse down the veranda of the club after the gymkana?"

"Be quiet!" the other said with contemptuous authority. "Whatever I have done, I am not a—" He hesitated, and looked toward the door and the window.

"Well," said the boy defiantly, "what am I that you have not been?"

"A thief—and a forger."

"You're a liar!" The pale face streaked with scarlet as if from the wales of a lash. He sprang forward, fists clenched, all the fighting muscles tense. "I'll make you take that back! I'll—"

"Stand still!" The words had the force of physical power. The lad halted. "Do you know who are in the library?" demanded the elder brother icily.

"Who?"

"Zaret and his bartender."

"That so?" Young Ellerby laughed with angry disdain. "Well, I know that I was in his place. They told me that. But so have you been."

"He has a cheque for five hundred dollars. He came here to ask me if he should present it at the bank."

"What is that to me? It is not my cheque."

"No; it is signed with mother's name. And you gave it to him."

"What!" The lad's face had a look of stunned surprise, almost fear, which was instantly replaced by contempt. "It's a lie. And you believe it? You believe a low hound of a gambling house keeper before you will me—your brother?"

"It is not a case of belief; he has the cheque, and it's from mother's book."

"I tell you," cried the boy frantically, "it is a game of Zaret's! I had the book—yes. She gave it to me to go over her stubs. I lost it—I lost it, I tell you! I never did it—before God, Bush, I never did it! You believe me, don't you, Bush? I never lied to anyone yet. I never—" He followed his brother, who had turned from him. His face was ashen and haggard, and he looked more than ever kin to the portrait.

Bushrod Ellerby opened the library door. "Zaret!" he called.

A stout, good-natured-looking man entered, a man who shone from broad surfaces of red face and sparkled from the facets of big diamonds in scarf and on hands.

"How are you, Mr. Thornton?" he said with fatherly amiability to the lad who stood by the table and whose face vied with the whiteness of the linen. Turning to the elder brother, the newcomer remarked pleasantly: "If you don't mind, I'll have in Oss." Then in response to a nod he called, "Oss!"

An individual, small, thin, with a face that was a triumph of stolidity, entered. The nervous smoothing of his vaselined

hair was the only sign that Oss gave that he found his surroundings disconcerting. Oss could face an angry pugilist bent upon wreckage with more composure than he could mahogany sideboards and Sheraton chairs.

"Shut the door," directed Zaret. Oss closed the door with as much care as he would have given to the mixing of a cocktail. Then he proceeded to efface himself in the proximity of the sideboard, where numerous glasses somehow suggested friendliness. At times during the succeeding scene he glanced at the gleaming array as if taking notes of the arrangement with a view to producing later on new and refined effects in more familiar surroundings.

"Now, Mr. Ellerby—" Zaret smiled upon the elder brother as if he had just received an order for champagne.

"Zaret"—it was the younger brother who spoke—"what is this lie about my giving you a cheque?"

"Now Mr. Thornton," he soothed, "what's the use of havin' trouble? I just come easy an' friendly. I never make no trouble when I can help it. Do I, Oss?"

"Sure," said Oss to the sideboard.

"You know I never gave you a cheque," said the boy fiercely.

"Yes, you did, Mr. Thornton. Didn't he, Oss?"

"Sure," said Oss to the sideboard.

"You're a liar, Zaret, if you say I gave you a cheque for five hundred!" Thornton Ellerby strode toward the smiling one.

"Stop!" said the elder brother. He spoke quietly, but the other obeyed. Contempt and defiance changed to dazed, helpless anger, and the eyes with which he regarded his brother held a covert appeal. But Bushrod Ellerby did not even look at him, and the boy stood back, his unclenched hands beginning to shake. Thrusting the hands into his pockets, he threw back his shoulders and again faced the smiling Zaret.

"Zaret, what occurred last night?" said the elder man in an expressionless voice.

"Well, Mr. Thornton came in with young Mr. Wilkes and Carter Boyd.



They were pretty well soused—weren't they, Oss?"

"Sure," acquiesced Oss to his friend the sideboard.

"I remember that," said the boy with a return of defiance.

"Well, they went in to play the wheel—didn't they, Oss?"

"Sure," said Oss.

"An' they was drinkin' wine—in highball glasses—weren't they, Oss?"

"Sure."

"Nineteen dollars and sixty-five cents—the sixty-five cents is for the glasses broke."

"Go on," said Ellerby.

"I only wanted to show you that I was givin' you everything straight, Mr. Ellerby. I never do anybody—do I, Oss?"

"Sure."

"Well, the next I knowed Mr. Thornton comes out and goes into a back room—didn't he, Oss?"

The person addressed assured the sideboard that all was truth in the spoken word.

"And in a few minutes he comes back an' asks me to cash a cheque. An' as it was his mother's, an' I knew her intimate—all the town knows that fine lady your mother, Mr. Ellerby—her always doin' things fer the poor an' never speakin' the hard word about the drunks. Old man Wilkinbrow says that he would rather work for her than for the President of the United States, that she is the only one that understands his weak heart an' never bawls him out the way the other ladies do when his heart gives out an' he has to take two or three days' rest in the middle of a plumbin' job."

"Finish what you have to say."

"Well, I cashed the cheque." He smiled blandly from all his red surfaces at once. "An' I thought I'd just drop around to see you, Mr. Ellerby, an' see if you wouldn't like to cash it yourself instead of me taking it to the bank." He paused and brushed his hat with a hand which had so many diamonds that it looked as if it were illuminated by high candlepower.

Oss withdrew his attention from the sideboard and furtively smoothed his

vaselined locks. For a moment there was silence in the sunny room; then—

"It's a lie," said the boy in a dead voice. He moistened his dry lips. "Let me see the cheque," he added huskily.

Zaret awoke to deferential compliance. "Oss," he said.

With the subconscious alacrity of the bartender when trouble brews, Oss moved between the boy and Zaret as the latter took out a large pocketbook, and extracting therefrom a blotted and scrawled piece of paper, held it out toward the younger Ellerby.

"No need to take it, Mr. Thornton. You can see it fine from there."

As the man said, there was no necessity for a closer examination. Every line, every stroke was plain to be seen. The boy's face suddenly grew old and he sank into a chair by the table, dropping his head on his arms to hide his shame.

For an instant Bushrod Ellerby hesitated; then he went to him and let his strong hand fall reassuringly on the hunched shoulders.

"No matter, boy," he said with a husky, almost unwilling tenderness. "Go—leave me to handle this. It will be all right."

The boy struggled to his feet, and compelled by the hand on his arm, stumbled to the door. There he paused and raised the broken, haggard misery of his face to his brother in shuddering appeal against judgment.

"I didn't know," he whispered—"I didn't know, brother—I didn't know."

"Keep out of mother's way. Leave it to me."

"I didn't know," repeated the boy in agony.

"I believe you, son. Keep away from mother." Bushrod Ellerby closed the door and turned with quiet dignity. "I will take up the cheque, Zaret. Give it to me." He held out his hand.

"One minute, Mr. Bush. The price of that cheque is five thousand dollars."

#### IV

ZARET sucked his thick plum-colored lips, and his eyes grew bright and menacing. He looked what he was, full

brother to the prowling night cat which claws the muck for what may be found there. "I mean it," he repeated harshly; "five thousand is the price of it."

The young man's thin dark brows arched above amused, sardonic eyes. "Zaret, my friend, you have been drinking. You should stick to selling liquor," he added with tolerant contempt.

"See here!" shouted the saloon keeper, scarlet on all his surfaces with angry blood.

"I do see; and there is a very ugly name for this game of yours, my friend."

The cool tone of the lawyer had its sobering effect upon Zaret, and with the practised agility of the liquor seller he changed from rage to expostulation. His next words were almost fatherly. "I know, Mr. Bush; but you see, there is an ugly name for what he done, too—an' I'm used to ugly names, an' he ain't."

"What if he did give you the cheque?" The young man was elaborately bored. "A gambling debt has no standing in law."

"A gambling debt!" Had Zaret just been accused of assault upon his own mother he could not have spoken with more pain. "Who's talkin' about a gambling debt? That five hundred is the back bill fer wines an' liquors an' money loaned. I guess wines and liquors has got standing in law."

"Zaret," Ellerby laughed contemptuously, "now you know that is a lie. You never would have trusted the boy."

"That's for you to prove. My books will show I'm speakin' the truth. Won't they, Oss?"

"Sure," said Oss.

For a moment his antagonist looked at him, then turned and opened the door into the hall. The scene revealed, familiar to Ellerby from his earliest childhood, seemed suddenly to present a significant, curiously personal appeal, as he stepped mechanically to the telephone. The long expanse of rug-covered floor ended in a wide staircase with spacious landings. Over the white handrail old portraits led the eye upward to the first of these landings, from which an old clock looked down, a clock with a revolving dial above the timeface to mark

the ebb and flow of tides for the information of planters whose fortunes might be at stake upon the seas. The tides had been kind to this house. For many years the breakers of time and change which had swept away other homes had broken harmlessly at safe distance from the doors of this one. But now to the mind of the man trusted to guard it, the waves of destruction surged perilously near and roared in his ears. A beautiful old house, dignified, reposeful—a house that had stood secure for years trusting to the protection of its masters, for there is an atmosphere of sentient trust about such a place. Each piece of furniture seemed to stand in loving peace with its neighbor, and in perfect faith that the master would not let it be torn away and cast out at the mercy of vandals. He had hated the house as a heavy load of luxury for backs too weak, and yet withal a husk, a sham that the waves of adversity might smash some day and welcome. Now each picture, each chair seemed part of him, protesting pitifully against separation. He had never thought of it like that before in all his selfish life. He had been false to his trust, as a son, as a brother, as a protector, not only of the material house, but of that other house not built by hands that we call home.

Absorbed in his thoughts, Ellerby had forgotten the men who watched him through the open door, but with mechanical action he took down the receiver of the telephone and came quickly to himself as Zaret spoke.

"What are you going to do, Mr. Bush?"

"Simply tell the bank to take up that cheque when it is presented."

From the doorway Zaret laughed. "Here—look at it close." He took the slip of paper from his pocket. "I didn't let you hold it, so perhaps you didn't see. I guess the red ink pad was kinder dry, fer the cashier's stamp is pretty faint, but it's there all right. See, 'forgery.' You see, I did go to the bank first. I told you I hadn't so as to spare your feelin's, but—well, I guess it's worth that five thousand, don't you think?"

Ellerby looked at the cheque, then hung up the receiver and stepped back into the room. His face was imperturbable, but the hand with which he closed the door shook slightly.

That imperturbability angered the blackmailer. With the practised rage of his calling he shouted: "See here! I'm through! You people think your heads are very high, don't you? Aristocracy of this holy flag station, ain't you? Well, I've seen bigger men than you come down fer me—yes, sir—an' as fine ladies as your mother—"

"Look out!" cried Oss, drawing his boss back with the bartender's alertness.

"I tell you," shouted the blackmailer, his little calm eyes in curious contrast to his violence, "I'm goin' straight to the Chief of Police; he's a relation of me wife's. In an hour your brother will be in jail. Your mother will feel fine drivin' up to the jail to see her kid."

"Look out," cried Oss again, interposing himself between the men.

At the touch on his breast Ellerby halted. "You're right—Oss." His anger died in a laugh of tolerant contempt. "Zaret, after all, you know your business." He paused for an instant's serious thought, then said: "Very well. How long will you give me to raise the money?"

"Why, take all the time you want, Mr. Bush," replied Zaret, restored to high good humor and respect. "Let's see—the bank closes at four. Say half past three."

The young man nodded.

"All right. Good day, Mr. Bush. Come in and have a drink on the house any time. If I ain't there, Oss will take care of you."

The man addressed did not answer, but turned from them, and resting the tips of his fingers on the table, looked down, a deep line between his brows.

The saloon keeper and his bartender hesitated, evidently in deep perplexity as to how to get out of the room. The door into the next room opened, revealing little Mrs. Ellerby. Seeing them, she hastily retreated. They fled precipitantly through the other door.

For a moment longer the young man

stood motionless, then roused himself, brushed a hand over a face grown tired and white and went into the hall. It was empty. He listened for the closing of the front door, then took down the receiver and asked for a private number. Presently over the wire came a cheery voice.

"Bob"—Ellerby cleared his throat—"I want to come over for a little talk with you right away."

But Bob was just starting for the city. What could he do for his friend?

"I have got to raise five thousand dollars on my note. Will you endorse it?" There was a long pause, while he listened to his friend's answer. Then he said: "Sorry, Bob. It must be awful to be in such straits. Hope everything turns out all right. Good-bye." Then he called up the bank. Bridget, clearing off the breakfast table, heard him say: "Hello—Mr. Ellerby to speak with Mr. Downs. . . . Ah, Jack. . . . Yes, there is something you can do for me. I want to raise five thousand dollars. . . . No, on my note." There was a long pause. Then, "Very well." The two words were spoken with finality but belied their meaning, and poor Bridget hurried to the kitchen to confide to old Nora that all was not well, that she mistrusted something was decidedly wrong; and the two faithful hearts that had shared the sunshine of prosperity mourned and prayed for the lifting of the clouds that seemed to be gathering over the house of Ellerby.

Back in the breakfast room Bushrod Ellerby sat once more at the table and held his head in his hands. "God!" he thought. "What shall I do? It will kill her!" Clearly he saw that the Ellerbys had come to the end of their rope. He had helped to the spinning of that rope, had seen debt and mortgage twisted into the fibers that now bound him. He, the head of the house, was most to blame, because for fear of the disturbance to his peace that would result from the women being torn from their spinning, he had suffered them to continue. For their position in the world they had paid. And now what would their position be? Sitting there, vainly

trying to find some way of escape, he tested himself with the acid of contempt and found how poorly he stood the test. He saw himself as he was, a traitor to his traditions. He told himself fiercely that there must be some way of escape for them, for his brother, his mother. There must be a way. He, the elder son, must find it. He would find it. But how? Where?

His mother's footsteps behind him, her fragile, trembling hand laid on his shoulder, warned him that she must be spared at any cost. It was a composed face that he raised to her strained, anxious one. "It was nothing of importance, mother. An unpaid bill of the boy's. I will take care of it."

She, with instinctive misgiving, was about to question further, when with honk of horn and flying spatter of gravel, a big muddy touring car bearing a swathed, goggled and waving load, sped past the windows. "It is Elinor!" Mrs. Ellerby's face softened and brightened as it always did at the sight of her favorite daughter. "She wrote that they would stop a few minutes here on their way from the race."

The man sprang to his feet. His wealthy brother-in-law was coming like a *deus ex machina*. Yet the rich are very prone to certain hardnesses. Ellerby realized that it was a dreary and disagreeable thing he had to do. It would not be easy to go to his new brother-in-law just back from the honeymoon. He felt a qualm of disgust at the thought. If there was one thing upon which the family stood firm it was disdain of the ordinary attitude toward the rich marriage and its uses. Yet there was nothing else. Perhaps Tom would make it easy—but, easy or not, that was the only way.

The sound of a slamming door and feet running down the hall brought him to himself. Then a slim girl, whom even goggles could not make anything but charming, ran into the room and cast herself upon Mrs. Ellerby with: "Hello, mother! Hello, Bush! Tom's outside in the car. He won't come in. Says it's too cold for the motor to stand. He gave Jim and me just a minute to see

you. You must know Jim. I wrote you about her." She seized her brother, kissed him and ran back to the door. "Jim!" she called. "Jim, come in here."

## V

THERE was a patch of mud on Jim's chin, and the morning damp, which had curled Elinor Fosdick's hair in adorable ringlets around her motor bonnet, had straightened poor Jim's locks as with a flatiron. But the eyes of Jim and her face were wholesome and good to see, as was also the lithe carriage of her as she entered. Elinor Fosdick was a beauty and Jim was not. Yet with the latter entered a thing which the beautiful one had not brought, and which can triumph over mud splashes and straight wisps of hair—the mystery that we call magnetism.

"Mother," cried the beauty, "this is Jim."

Mrs. Ellerby, slightly bewildered, held out welcoming hands to her guest, who laughed as she approached to take those hands, the sort of laugh that lifts the corners of all mouths within hearing.

"The rest of my name is Manson, Mrs. Ellerby—Jemima Manson, but the 'Jemima' is a deep secret and never to be mentioned."

"And Bush," cried the youngest of the Ellerbys—"I think you know Bush."

He stepped forward, smiling his easy accustomed smile.

Yes, she knew Bush. Her eyes said that she knew him—that is, she knew him as he had tried for a few moments of emotional experiment to make her.

"I hope my face is familiar," he said in a low voice as he took her hand.

"Yes," she said with a half-smile.

"What are you people doing up so early? It must have been hours since you left the Wilkeses," said Mrs. Ellerby.

"Three o'clock this morning," said the beauty.

Her mother gasped.

"The automobile race, Mrs. Ellerby," said Jim. "Tom took us. Oh, it was marvelous! I shall never forget it."

"Who won?" asked Ellerby.

"A dear little Frenchman," said both ladies.

"What car?"

"What was the name of the car?" asked the ladies of each other.

"What car won? Don't you know?" inquired the man.

"It was so exciting I forget," said Jim.

"I'll ask Tom," said the beauty. She ran to the window and threw it up.

"Tom, what car won?"

"Hurry up, you girls. I can't keep the car standing in this cold," shouted a bundle of furs from which the goggles stared menacingly.

"Tom"—Jim sought the window—"what car won?"

"A Dijon. Hello, little mother-in-law!" This to Mrs. Ellerby, who, having swathed her head and mouth in her shawl for protection from the fresh air, could only wave her hand. "Hurry up, girls! I tell you the motor is getting cold."

"We will come when we get good and ready," said the beauty; "leave the motor running and come in;" and she gently closed the window on the spluttering mass of fur.

Presently they all went into the kitchen to inspect one of the cook's latest masterpieces, and Bushrod and Jim were left alone in the room.

They looked at each other, the man and the girl; he with the wonder as to how soon he could get rid of her presence and its hindrance of his plan; she with—perhaps with no other thought than the one she put into her next words:

"You see, I followed you. Do you think you should have made me do that?" A bright blush stained her face, but her voice was steady, her eyes level, kind and touched with affectionate amusement.

His honest bewilderment gave a suggestion of hesitation, almost embarrassment, rather attractive to see in his suave, confident face.

"You have your pride, I know," she continued, "but you are merciless in it—so much so that you allow me none."

Utterly taken back by her manner, which implied depths of intimacy into

which he had not thought she had admitted him, he hesitated, groping. Then suddenly he remembered—fragments of the light scene he had played with her came back. At the time he had thought her very serious, and curiously enough, had been relieved at the interruption which had followed quickly upon his kiss. Once or twice in a life not free from flirtations he had gone too far, and something in her manner that night when she had yielded her lips made him think that he had added one more time. Light, sardonic *flâneur* that he was, he had had a moment's qualm that sent him away the next day without seeing her. He had the power, when he chose, of making his most shallow moments seem the deepest. That he had used that power successfully in the recent encounter was plainly recorded in the face before him. Under the smile with which he regarded her he felt the selfish man's anger at the woman who inconveniences him. It was annoying that she could not take care of herself, and above all annoying that she should be here now blocking his plans for the interview with his brother-in-law. Further, he was struck by the irony that she, the rich and secure, should have followed him, and he sighed involuntarily at the miserable arrangement of this life. Oh, for enough from her millions to meet this wretched crisis!

Her millions! Why not? What if it were to take a beastly advantage of the girl? His set was full of that sort of thing. A rich marriage had always seemed to him the refuge of the fool and the weakling. He could have made one before had he cared for that kind of life, but another person's money had not so far attracted him. There had been no nobility in the renunciation—he had seen too much of the paid husband. But now what other way was open, except to drag the family pride at the feet of his sister's newly married husband, and risk refusal—or worse, the gall of the patronizing relative? The Ellerbys had so far held fiercely aloof from that. But this was a way—not easy, but easier than the other.

He drew a little nearer and looked at

her with practised softness of eye, and spoke with the same softness of voice which had always been one of his assets in lovemaking.

"I do not understand," he said slowly.

"But I do. I knew it before your sister told me—when I found you had gone that morning. It is the pride which you all cherish so. You would not—you are letting my wretched money be a bar between us." Her frank eyes were whimsically tender, with perhaps a suggestion of the ironical pathos typical of the rich girl whose fortune has had many suitors. "But I knew—I saw that night—when you kissed me."

He, clever man of the world of women that he was, could not just find the smooth word that would give him the prize, which was the price of peace for his house. For a moment his mask slipped, and she saw that he was tired and anxious and unhappy. Poor Jim was not made to bear the sight of unhappiness in anyone, least of all in the man who seemed to her the finest she had ever met.

"That is why you went away—isn't it? Your sister says it was, and I—I thought so, too; and that is why I came. My happiness is worth some sacrifice of pride, if yours is not."

"I have never posed as a fortune hunter," he said harshly.

"I have simply got to have a nip! The bottle we brought is empty—Tom drank it all up," cried the beauty, bursting in in a whirl of silk and flutter of flying furs. "Get me some brandy, Bush!"

Her brother went to the sideboard. She looked for a moment at her friend's flushed face and telltale eyes. "Did he do it?" she hissed in a burning ear.

"He is going to—if you'll get out!" came the reply in a tense whisper.

When the young man turned from the sideboard, brandy bottle in hand, he was confronted by one girl only. The door was swaying on its hinges.

"You were saying—" said the girl softly.

He hesitated. He had forgotten what he was saying.

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"You were saying"—somewhat fiercely—"that you never pretended to pose as a fortune hunter. That is why you went away, I suppose—which shows, Bush Ellerby, what a fool you are. Just because of your nasty pride, I have to do the disgraceful thing of running after the man who has told me he loves me, to find out if he meant it. Oh"—with the stamp of a foot—"it is unbearable!" She caught sight of the mud splash on her chin in the mirror and it added to her rage. "If you did not mean it, say so, and I will go away. It makes no difference to me what you meant, anyway."

He secured the hand that sought to wipe off the mud splash, which did not tend to increase her pleasure with him. "I realized that I must seem like all the rest who have been after you," he said. "How could I know that you cared for me—Jim?"

"How could you know?" she flamed, tearing her hand away. "Because I let you kiss me—that's why. When a man tells me he loves me, and kisses me, and I let him—let him—let him—do you suppose it—that I— Stop! You shall not kiss me, Bush—not with the brandy bottle in your hand! I won't have you, anyway." The bottle fell and rolled on the thick rug. "I will not—you are such a fool!"

"Then have pity on a fool," he whispered, and kissed her.

The touch of his lips on her flesh made her quiver in a last rebellion. Then he felt her body yield; her lips sought his; with a laugh and a sob she kissed him.

A motor horn broke into a hoarse wail of rage. They did not hear it. Her lips were fresh and warm, and his were the lips which she had dreamed from girlhood would some day come.

"Oh, land of love!" said a small scared voice behind them. They sprang apart and beheld the overwhelmed figure of the tiny mistress of the house of Ellerby. Behind her the beauty glowed maternal approval, while still farther back the face of Bridget glowered.

"Mother," said the young man, "this is my—promised wife."

After they had gone, Ellerby stood thinking. Presently he strode to the telephone, wrathfully dragged down the receiver and called a number. "Is this the River House?" he demanded. . . . "Oh, Zaret, this is Mr. Ellerby. I want you to take my note for three months with interest for that money. I shall be in need of all the money I can use till then. . . . Just one moment. I am going to be married to Miss Manson. You know of her father, the president of the — . . . Yes, I thought you did. Very well."

He hung up the receiver, lighted a cigarette and began to smoke in short, impatient puffs.

"So I am to be a paid husband!" he muttered.

## VI

THE engagement caught the public imagination. Editors did not hesitate to throw out a column about the peace treaties in favor of pictures of the prince, the duke and the girl who had passed them by for an American with no money. The love match was discussed before bars and extolled behind counters. Pulpit and press resounded with acclamations for the American girl who had scorned "decayed and mercenary noblemen" in favor of a fellow countryman of "sterling manliness and worth."

New respect enveloped the Ellerby family. Tradesmen refused to send in accounts until commanded. Rich relatives, relieved of the fear that cordiality of manner might be mistaken for cordiality of purse, hastened to send ostentatious gifts; fashionable ones rejoiced that their relatives could now take the place to which they were entitled. The Ellerbys had clung to their pride of birth, seeking in it compensation for the decline of their fortunes. The more the money drained away, the more fiercely they clutched the idea that they were of the inner circle to which money was not a necessity. They took a secret pride in the sight of their mother's dowdy black garments in the sepulchral mid-Victorian drawing rooms of the old brick "mansions" fronting upon downtown parks, for though the Ellerbys

now lived out of town all the year round, they had formerly owned a town house which they occupied for many years in the season, and they still maintained relations with the stately old neighborhood where time-worn specimens of another period cling fondly to the idea that they are still of importance, and never cease to lament a certain call made in the early eighties by one lady upon another as presaging the degeneration of modern society. This dingy, haughty little circle deplored the marriage, but as it prided itself upon its social reticence, its opinion caused no discord in the general harmony of praise.

The stepmother of the bride-elect, when she received the guests who had come by special train to the interior city where the wedding was to be celebrated, and took hands which had firmly closed doors in her face at Newport, felt for the first time that possibly her daughter was getting something for her money. That mother's elderly friends, presiding at gorgeous dinners of welcome and trying to hide their sense of shock at the freedom of manner and language of their guests, reflected that possibly the Manson family was getting too much for its money. The elderly ladies of the interior city still brought to their orchid-laden dinner tables the "company manners" of their chicken-and-ice cream period.

And so they were married.

Mrs. Lawton's rigid figure and expressionless face as she alights from her limousine at the awning can be seen for five cents in most moving picture houses. Her remark to a fashionable cousin as she surveyed the shimmering pews, "Mercy! They are all so new they shine!" was the single piece of bad taste of which she was outwardly guilty. But for the fact that one of the oldest friends of the bride was in the pew behind, that remark would never have reached Jim's ears. With this single exception the outward manner of the family was flawless. They were reported, and nothing in their visible attitude contracted the report, to be delighted with the match. It speaks volumes for Mrs. Lawton's social training that she ac-



cepted the felicitations of her friends without disturbing the general impression.

The bridal couple having departed for the South, the rest of the Ellerbys returned home. The fact that they did less entertaining than usual was ascribed to a desire to await the young couple's return before plunging into a vortex of gaiety. It was known that the Bushrod Ellerbys were to perch on the family bough for a short time before settling down in their own elaborate nest, which was even then in process of construction. Meanwhile the townspeople and the occupants of surrounding country houses amused themselves with watching for evidences of new prosperity.

No such evidences developed, but a new attitude did. Mrs. Lawton, who had heretofore striven violently to preserve an outward appearance of wealth, now was heard to speak openly, even exultingly, of her poverty and that of her family. She positively reveled in evidences of extreme want, such as refusing to cable to Paris for a few pitiful garments before the opening of the opera season, and solemnly forsaking bridge. But in spite of these new manifestations, which, had they been shown when there was real reason for them, would have caused the open comment that the Ellerbys were "at last going under," the country houses and the town continued to smile indulgently. All realized that when the head of a family whose members, however inwardly they might battle, outwardly stood firmly by one another, marries a great fortune, the personal idiosyncrasies of individual members are to be forgiven in the sure knowledge that one and all will share in the newfound prosperity. It was with rosy expectations of larger trade and sure payment that both country houses and village storekeepers awaited the return of the young couple.

It was on the night of that return, while the Ellerby coachman and gardener, with the help of a diagram drawn in beer on the bar of the River House, were discussing the new addition to the stables which they felt was needed, that

a surprising thing suddenly happened. Zaret opened a bottle of "wine" to the health of the young couple. It lacked something like a month to the time when the note in his safe would fall due, but he grew genial in the warmth of the prosperity which seemingly enwrapped the Ellerbys.

However, later on in the month, it was noticed that Zaret lost all generous impulses, and in a moment of self-revelation he confided to Oss that if people thought he was a mark they would find out something, and so help him, he was going to cut a certain party's comb if he tried any tricks or was up to any funny work with him. And more than one man had discovered that, no matter how unreliable he was in some ways, in others Zaret was a man of his word.

## VII

THROUGH the library windows the dry, withered grass of the sloping lawns could be seen washed with long streams of fading sunlight. The pines which lined the drive were black against a cold primrose sunset. It had been a day not unusual in March, a day warm and bright and windless, now fading to an icy night. The still cold hand of dying Winter was reaching out to clutch the world as if to prove that Spring had not entered into her inheritance. In the room the fireplace was beginning to be useful after hours of ornamental idleness behind its elaborate screen. Over by the windows a table had been pushed nearer the light that the last rays might illumine the architectural blue prints spread over it. Three people were engaged in examining the prints.

"And this shall be your room." Mrs. Bushrod Ellerby turned to Miss Ellerby in explanation, but some faint stirring of disapproval in the face before her made her add: "I mean when you come to see us." The quick manner in which the explanation was proffered indicated a quality one would not have looked for in Jim, namely tact, a quality that might well have been considered superfluous in one having so many possessions.

Miss Ellerby cleared her throat. "I wish, Jemima, that you would not speak of it as *my* room. You know you married Bushrod, not the family."

"It shall be done in pink," continued Jim. "That is your color, and so becoming to you."

Miss Ellerby grew a little less stately. Her fondness for pink had always been frowned on in the family circle as not in keeping with her age. She allowed an eye to wander back to the plan.

"When you visit us," her sister-in-law went on, "I am going to have a lot of the brainiest men I can find, men that you will really enjoy."

"Huh!" The exclamation, weighted with sour contempt, came from the youth in riding clothes whose khaki-clad elbows rested on the plans.

Jim gave him instant attention. "What do you mean by that 'huh'?" Evidently from her crisp tone here was one member of the family with whom there was no need for tact. "Thornton Ellerby, if you were half as good-looking for a man as your sister is for a woman, I might have to consider asking girls to meet you, because they might have some desire to do so."

"What makes you say that they have no desire to meet me?" A slow blush crept from stock to hair. "Who has been talking to you about me?"

His question, his look of embarrassment and shame, surprised her. Evidently, all unaware, she had again made a false step in this house of pitfalls. Then divining the cause of the boy's self-consciousness, she laughed and looked at him with compassionate affection. "Who has been talking to me? Everybody—all the girls." She thought he would question her, as other boys she knew would have done. Instead, he bent his head to examine the plans. She realized that an opportunity was slipping away. The rigid woman on the other side of the table, whose silence was thunderous with knowledge of what the world was saying of her brother, was surprised and shocked to see her sister-in-law place an arm about the boy's shoulders with an emotional affection revolting to consider. Emotion with

the Ellerbys was strictly confined to, and only excusable by, the passion of anger.

"Why don't you finish your fishing excursion?" said Jim.

He gave her his suspicious, wincing attention. The whip had never been raised to him in all his life, but since the very beginning of his sensitive boyhood he had been under the lash of the deep cutting tongues of his keen-minded elders. The American home has banished the rod, but the lash of the tongue can sometimes replace it and leave scars that are more enduring.

"Yes, tell me the compliment for which I have been fishing," said the boy, and there was a sneer in his waiting eyes. She knew that the words really meant: "If you think, because you are my elder brother's wife, that you are going to preach to me, you are mistaken."

"They said"—she paused, letting him have the full benefit of her mischievous regard—"that is, the girls at the Country Club said—that if you did not stop hiding yourself and refusing to accept invitations, they would absolutely see that it came to Ned Willing's ears that it was the general opinion in the club that you are the real M.F.H., and that but for your help he would have let the hounds be overridden several times in the last meets. And if he hears that he will bar you from the hunt. They also asked me if we had any better rider on the ranches. For the honor of my country I had to say yes. But when we have the next house party at Las Aguilas I am going to see if I am right."

"Do you have house parties on ranches?" inquired an acidulous feminine voice.

"Why, yes; we give them frequently at our place. The city people find them most amusing."

"What are you going to call the new house, Jemima?" asked Miss Ellerby.

"Bush shall name it—it is his house."

"Do it yourself. Don't yield so to the men. It is your house."

"Not mine, but ours, Miss Ellerby."

Ever since she had come to the home

of the Ellerbys they had made her feel that though she was with them, under their roof, she was not of them. Quarrels subsided when she entered a room. Sarcasm veiled in courtesy awaited the renewal of the battle at her going. At times she had gritted her teeth in barbaric and human longing to enter the fray, but that they did not permit. It was to this one, the youngest and hardest of them all, that her real liking had gone out. By instinct she felt that the man she loved had failed somehow as a brother with this dissipated, unhappy lad, and that failure was a blemish on his perfection which must be wiped away.

The telephone rang.

Her face flushed and her eyes danced. Care seemed to slip from her, and with happy freedom she pushed Thornton away from the instrument. "Get away—that must be Bush," she cried. Whatever disappointment she had found in the family, her husband, it was evident, had no part in it. Her frank, open joy as she took the receiver brought a sudden teasing grin to Thornton's face, the first intimate grin he had ever given her. Perhaps he had grown more charitable, but for the first time it occurred to him that his brother's wife was a remarkably pretty girl.

"No, he is not at home," he heard her say. "Yes, he will be here tonight." She hung up the receiver and added to her grinning companion: "You bet he will."

"Who was it?"

"I don't know. A nasty, greasy voice. Some client, I suppose."

"Lady?"

"Certainly not. Never mind who it was. I can forgive even greasy voices. I am not going to let anybody put me out of humor. Come to think of it"—she gave him a radiant smile—"the whole world is nice, and I love it—even you, my lad!"

"And Catherine?"

"Well—h'm—Catherine is an acquired taste." The thought of her husband's coming had put her into a whirl of girlish, healthy mischief, which looked from her eyes at the youth already relapsing into hard moodiness. She saw

that shade by shade he was slipping back into the sullen boy who had repelled her, and the excitement of happiness found sudden youthful vent in protest after the long repression of the day. "Thornton Ellerby," she cried, "you are too completely groomed—that's what's the matter with you. Why don't you look like a kid, you old man, you? I wonder if you would if I mussed your hair?" She came lithely at him, eyes dancing.

With a good boyish laugh to which the walls were strangers he ran from her. They circled the table. A chair fell over, but she cleared it with a spring as swift and athletic as his own. He rushed through the door, banged it in her face and held it against her. She pulled it with all the strength of her young arms and it opened suddenly. Mrs. Lawton stood before her.

"Thornton," said Catherine icily, ignoring the girl, "the uproar you are making may be in place in the barrooms to which you are accustomed, but it is out of place here." She restored the fallen chair with a bang with which an angry mother seats her infant.

"I wish this house was half as pleasant as a barroom!" he cried, scarlet with exertion and annoyance.

"Don't speak of such places—it is common."

"Why, good Lord, you yourself—"

"Don't swear—it is disgusting. I came to tell you that the expressman has been here with that chicken wire, and I sent it away."

"Sent it away!" he shouted furiously. "How dared you? Mother told me that I could keep chickens—you heard her."

"Well, I made her forbid it. You may get intoxicated, but as for keeping chickens, *that* is the final depth."

"Where is mother?" He was beside himself with passion. "I'll just tell her what I think of this! I work all day in that darned old office and can't even keep a few chickens! Where is mother? Where is she?"

"Upstairs in her room," said Jim quietly.

"Catherine Lawton, you mean woman"—he stammered in his wrath—

"you're not content with having made your husband's life a hell, but you must do it for everyone else. I'll tell mother what I think of this."

The echo of the slam of the door seemed to hurry away frightened by the deathlike pause as the women looked at each other. Both were perfectly self-possessed, but the feminine battle light flickered like summer lightning across a thunderous situation. Mrs. Lawton had entered on a scene which told her plainly that at least one member of the family had gone over to the enemy. Therefore she resolved that order should still reign in Warsaw if it called all the cannon into play.

"Why do you object to his keeping chickens, Mrs. Lawton?" inquired Jim, her tone like the bow of the duelist before the rapiers cross.

"I don't think I can make you understand, but—er—well, the family has had trouble enough as it is without the added one of having to shoo chickens out of flower beds." The click of the thirsting steel was in every word.

"I should prefer to shoo chickens out of flower beds all my days rather than that my brother should spend his idle time in the café of the Country Club. Your brother is fond of dumb things." Here the steel seemed to run over the other's guard. "Why not let him have them? They might keep him out of trouble."

"Nothing can keep him out of trouble. He is like his Uncle Bushrod."

"Oh, Uncle Bushrod!" breathed Jim between her teeth. But her anger died. Her sound sense was always too much for it. Her father had said of her that Jim could forgive almost anything, but in his opinion that was the kind of person who upon occasion could forgive nothing. And old Manson was said to be a judge of human nature. Her next words, spoken in an almost friendly tone, surprised her antagonist now warming up for the battle.

"Nonsense, Mrs. Lawton. Do you know what is the matter with that boy?"

"I have told you. He is like his uncle. In every generation there is one like that."

"Nonsense. He is simply doing the wrong work. Your brother is being trained for the law. As a matter of fact, he is a farmer."

As soon as she had spoken Jim felt that the battle would be without quarter. She was delighted. All her life until she married she had been free to express herself. Both her heart and her human nature urged her to do it now. And to healthy blood, wrong as the impulse may be, there is a love of a good fight in a good cause. Therefore, having fired the mine, she waited for the explosion that would allow her to pour her forces through the breach in Mrs. Lawton's self-control.

Mrs. Lawton, however, did not do the expected. No explosion occurred. In spite of her brusqueness and vigor, which allied her to types perfectly familiar to Jim, there were inward differences and dissimilarities most surprising and puzzling to her antagonist. Catherine Lawton had the instinct for handling pause which is inborn and stamps its owner with sure kinship to a social order. And there now ensued a pause during which the girl felt with fury that the woman was wrapping naked ignorance in fold on fold of kind, charitable silence. It seemed to her that if she did not cry out she would be forever muffled.

"I mean it!" she cried impatiently.

Mrs. Lawton smiled, a smile which said: "Of course you mean it, but that does not imply that you understand what you are talking about."

"Yes, every word of it! What were the aristocracy from which you are descended? Farmers, every one of them. They made their living on farms—called 'manors,' but, for all that, farms. They were workers—yes, and their wives were workers. It was part of a lady's education to be a worker in those days. They knew how to spin and cook and manage their servants—especially cook. Take your mother—she was born in the last of the old generation. She is a perfect cook." Mrs. Lawton's raised brows drove Jim into flaming violence. "She is. We—she and I—went into the kitchen yesterday while you were in

New York." Mrs. Lawton became intent. "And she showed me how to make a sweet potato pie." Mrs. Lawton drew her breath as if it were a knife for a traitor's bosom. "Yes," exultingly, "we had the most adorable time. Those dear old servants cried every minute of it, they were so happy. They said that it had been years since their mistress had felt like making a pie."

Mrs. Lawton's lips opened as if her self-control would escape through them; then she clutched it, as it were, by its flying coattails, and was silent.

"Yes, working was part of a lady's education in that time with which you are so proud to be connected. The women were not idlers or parasites on their husbands."

Mrs. Lawton's breast heaved, and her eyes glared bright from the furnace in that heaving bosom.

"Yes, real helpmates they were to the men who were glad to call themselves farmers and from whom your brother gets his love of life. Do you know what the bookshelves in his room are full of?" Mrs. Lawton quivered. More treachery! The intruder had been in her brother's room. "Well, treatises on scientific farming—the course that I understand the family prevented his following at college."

"Of what use was his following it? We have no farm. And this family is not in a position where any of the men can follow unremunerative pursuits."

"Mrs. Lawton"—Jim had a grip on her temper now; it was in a pleasant and reasonable tone that she continued. Self-control as well as the fighting spirit had built her father's fortune, and more than his money he had shared with his daughter. "My father made the same mistake with my brother—at first; and the result was unhappiness and dissipation. Finally father realized his mistake. He is a very sensible man, Mrs. Lawton, and so he sent my brother to Paris and let him study art. The result is that he is happy, and so is my father."

"Oh, your brother is an artist?" Mrs. Lawton clutched the chance to get away from a subject in which an outsider could

have no participation. "Does he design the lard posters I see at the grocer's?"

"No." Young Mrs. Ellerby regarded her sister-in-law with bright intimacy. "I am sure he would not approve of them. You mean the one of the 'Free West,' showing Manson's Lard to all the world, do you not?"

"Yes; I noticed that the West was very free—of clothes."

"So did I. But possibly the poster was designed to please the Eastern taste."

"Most interesting," remarked Mrs. Lawton, and left the room.

Young Mrs. Ellerby smiled at the door. "The trouble with this house is," she said placidly to herself, "that it has been ruled by a female bully, and that is very bad because nobody can knock her down. One can't approve of wife beaters, but one can understand them—sometimes."

"Where is mother?" Thornton Ellerby strode into the room. "She is not upstairs."

"I knew it when I sent you there," calmly returned Jim.

"Then why did you tell me she was?"

"In a choice between deceiving you and sparing your mother a scene with her younger son in the character of angry baby, I will never hesitate." He looked at her glowering. "Come, hasn't it worked off any of your rage to run up and down stairs, or do you still want to take it out of her?"

He glared at her again. "You are right," he said slowly, blushing to the ears, "dead right—but you don't quite understand. I had hoped to make her some money out of those chickens. The managers of the estates around here would have bought of me if I could have bred them high enough. And I know I could have done it. I never will be a success at the law, or able to do my share for her. But"—he scowled helplessly—"Catherine rules this roost."

"But you can still breed them."

"You don't know Catherine, Jim. To tell the truth, at the bottom we all know that in the end we shall have to give in to her."

"I'd like to see her stop you if your

chicken farm was on my—our place! See here!" she cried, afire with the idea. "We will have the architects get to work tomorrow on ornamental hen houses. Ornamental hen houses inflame my imagination, Thornton." She laughed gaily and caught up a pencil. "Come on, let's plan."

"Good of you, Jim," he said soberly, "but I can't, you know."

"Why not?"

"Because—well, don't you see?" He blushed again.

She replaced the pencil. "I see," she said quietly. "Because you refuse to use my money. You refuse to consider me as one of the family."

"No," he cried, "but—well, we can't use you. That's what I mean. Don't you see, Jim?" There was a covert appeal in his voice.

But she did not soften. "You are, all of you, a trifle cruel. I suppose you don't quite understand how much, but you are."

"Now, Jim," he begged, and she saw that he was hurt and miserable.

"It is growing dark. Would you mind turning on the lights? I want to write some letters," she said coldly. He obeyed. Going to a desk, she sat down and began to write. She knew that he stood uneasily, then took his crop from the table but did not go. She felt that he was trying to speak, or that he hoped she would. A shoulder remained turned to him. The door closed softly.

"I think," said Jim to herself, "that I did that look of pain very well. Mrs. Lawton, you forget when you try to shut me out of this family that there are men in it." She chuckled and bent again to her writing, which ended with the words, "Your loving daughter." Then she twinkled once more. "Yes, father," she said, "your loving daughter, but also your fighting daughter when she sees anything worth fighting for." Impulsively she kissed the letter when she had sealed it. "You old dear! You are very Christian now. I know just what you would say if you knew: 'Forgive your enemies.' And so I will, but not before my forgiveness amounts to some-

thing." She took out her stamp case. "There," with a bang on the face of the Father of His Country, "there, Mrs. Lawton, that is the first gun. I think in the end you will find that I am a member of this family."

## VIII

WHEN young Mrs. Ellerby turned from the desk it was to behold her mother-in-law entering the room. That the little lady had been making an excursion in the world was indicated by the small, tight bonnet, which somehow suggested to Jim that it had been made by mistake for the extra-large little widow of a robin. The resemblance to a small bird was further accentuated by the sealskin sacque that, for reasons known to purveyors of fashion in the eighties, had sleeves exactly like wings. The look of mute, helpless bewilderment behind the gold spectacles showed that the journey had been of a business nature. This was confirmed by the first words spoken with the plaintive Southern caress of the vowels that fifty Northern years had been powerless to eradicate:

"I simply cannot understand it. The bank must have made a mistake."

Jim sprang up and proceeded briskly to extract her mother-in-law from the depths of the sealskin, and to reveal that tiny person clad in limp black. Why is it that the representatives of a past generation, from the Faubourg St. Germain to King Street, Charleston, go always in limp black? And how is it that they manage to make it seem the only fitting accompaniment for their exquisite mildness?

"What is the matter, dear?" said the girl, as she knelt to remove the rubbers without which her mother-in-law would no more have ventured abroad than she would have thought of opening her bedroom window to the deadly night air. The girl's action had in it a pretty air of affectionate, protecting service good to see in youth to age—youth being rather apt to think that age is age because it wants to be, and therefore should take the consequences of the attitude.

"It's the bank." That word had come to mean such fearful and lurking terrors that it was spoken with almost as much awe as the name of the Deity. "They wrote me that I had overdrawn my account. But I told Charlie Foster that it must be a mistake. I always put every cheque I draw down in the back of my book"—producing the bankbook as if it were a character witness—"and you can see that I have still a balance of a hundred and twenty dollars."

"Have you your canceled cheques?"

"Yes," producing from the maw of a black bag a bundle of cheques bound with a rubber band.

Jim took them, seized a lead pencil from the table, and sinking on a footstool began to figure. There was something so relentlessly businesslike in the way the slips flew under her fingers that the older woman resumed the perturbed flutterings which she always exhibited when interviewing the kindly but relentless young men at the bank.

"I—I am sure I put them all down as I draw them," she faltered.

"All of them, Mother Ellerby?"

"Yes—all but the very small ones. They couldn't make a difference of a hundred and twenty dollars. I am sure they are careless at the bank. If Bush were not so worried I should ask him to reprove them."

"Worried?" Jim looked up. "What about?"

"I am sure I don't know. Something at the office, I suppose. He is working so hard there. You must warn him, dear, not to overtax himself."

"I will. The idea of his being worried and not telling me! What do you suppose it is? Why didn't I see it?"

"Bush wouldn't let you see, of course."

"Why not?"

"Because it would not be right."

"Right—*right*? What business has a husband to have any rights where his wife is concerned? As to worrying me—if there is one sure way in which a husband can sink his wife beneath a load of care, just let him set out not to worry her!" The bright, clear eyes were raised to note the shock she was about

to bring to the old face. "When the bishop was saying 'Love, honor and obey,' I was adding, 'I will, if it is for his good.'" Her strong hand went quickly to the wrinkled one and closed with firm affection. "You know, Mrs. Ellerby, that you would not want your son to be married to a mummy who never did anything but grin and say nothing. But"—her brows wrinkled—"are you sure? I know everything is going well at the office. The firm has placed the whole preparation of the gas company's appeal in Bush's hands, and when he wins the case you are going to have a very noted son."

Her bright reassurance was like the support of a strong young arm to one who had ever found the road of practical worldly affairs bewilderingly difficult to traverse.

"He has done so well, even in the short time that he has known you," said his mother. "Yes," in answer to the flush of pleasure and the expectancy in the eyes, "Tom says a member of the firm told him that Bush was a new man of late—that he seemed to throw himself into the work in a way which showed them that, while they may have estimated his ability correctly, they had not estimated his energy."

It was a happy face that Jim bent above the cheques. Even the pencil, held feminine-like lengthwise in the mouth, did not hide the flattered smile. Then the smile vanished and a regretful face was lifted. "The bank is right."

"Oh, dear! And I do try to be economical."

"Don't let it worry you." Jim stroked the hand she had taken much as if she were consoling a child. "I'll lend you what you want."

"No, dear." There was a soft, mild dignity in the voice. However helpless Mrs. Ellerby might be in handling her business, she was not helpless now. "We married you, not your money. And oh, we have found all that we longed for in you!" Had Mrs. Lawton heard the tones and seen her mother's face, she would have felt in her breast the sting sharper than a serpent's tooth—a disobedient mother. "I always make a



note to the bank and pay it back next quarter day."

The girl slipped from the footstool and knelt so as to look directly into the face of the little woman in the big chair. Holding the soft, shriveled hands firmly, she spoke:

"Dear, you hurt me. And you must not hurt me, because I am so happy now. All my life this money has been my enemy, driving from me those I wanted, bringing to me those I did not want. I was taught that money was something holy, setting its owner apart. I was sent to a school where because her underclothes were not hand-embroidered they shut a girl out of a secret society. When I came out people never spoke of me, but of my money—money—*money!* We went abroad, and it was the same.

"Now listen: My own mother was a school teacher. She taught my father to read after she married him. I don't remember her, but the reason father has been so generous with me is because he says she made his fortune. My step-mother is the daughter of a man who made millions in steel. She saw to my education, and we have always been the best of friends. Even when she discovered that father was descended through a branch of the Smith family from the Bourbons, and she wanted to put the royal arms of France over the mantelpieces—even then she was nice to me when I induced father to forbid it. He read to her Saint Simon's description of the character of Monsieur, and then requested her to be charitable and not mention that branch of the family. I tell you all this because I want you to realize that I did not get my point of view about money from my education. I think I had begun to take the wrong view when one day I received an anonymous card with a verse on it. To this day I remember the lines. They have been my real teacher. They are:

"She cannot walk, she cannot talk,  
She cannot think, but folks aver  
That millions have been set apart  
To walk and talk and think for her."

"How cruel!" said the old lady.

"Wasn't it?" with a gay laugh.  
"Especially for a girl's father to do!"

"Your father sent them?"

"So I discovered. It was during my first season at Newport, when the Duke had followed me from Europe. Father told me that if I had been a boy he would have tried to raise me, but being a girl he had to leave me to the women. He said that even then he was not much worried over how I would come out, because he had had, he said, some acquaintance with my mother. But he advised me to keep the poem. I did. I refused the Duke—and"—Jim looked very grave—"he was such a nice duke." She lowered her lids.

"But"—the thick lashes rose like curtains to reveal imps of mischief sporting in gray pools of limpid clearness—"he was not very much like the man for whom I had always been waiting." The imps were gone, and all the gray was soft and deep and full of mellow, tender light. "When I saw Bush I loved him—and he loved me. It was just like one of those dear old stories that no one reads any more. He loved me, and"—her voice sank weighted with tender memory—"he kissed me the first night he met me. *He* has not let my wretched money bar me away. Will you?"

According to her code Mrs. Ellerby should have been firm. But, "My daughter!" she said, and pressed her lips to the young forehead.

The girl caught her in passionate young arms.

"You've said it!" she cried almost fiercely. "You've said it—you sha'n't take it back!"

"No. I have wanted to say it before, dear, but I did not know if you would let me, or that you could feel toward me as I feel to you."

"I have you now," the girl whispered—"I have you and him—a lover and a mother. All my life I have longed for just that. The money—the hateful money! I have fought through it—I have—I have!"

With a sigh of utter content she laid her head on the dingy black lap. For a moment there was silence. Then the girl slid all the way to the floor, rested her cheek against the limp skirt

and with contented eyes watched the flames dance about the log to the gay accompaniment of crackling castanets.

"Mother," she said, "when Bush came home after meeting me first, did he speak to you about me?"

But before a word could be spoken in reply the door vomited Bridget—Bridget with rage and clutching a teapot to her bosom as she shouted:

"There never has been five o'clock tea in Bridget an' Nora's kitchen, an' there never will be, not for all the French foreigners in the world! I've caught her at it—I have! Bridget and Nora savin' an' skimpin', an' the French dago wastin' the poor lady's money in five o'clock tea for herself!"

"What is it? Oh, me, what is it?" quavered the frightened mistress of the house, starting to her feet.

"Seven teaspoonfuls out of the best canister!" cried the outraged one, waving the teapot at her shrinking mistress. "An' Bridget and Nora never knowin' where it went! Sixty-five cents a pound, an' I caught the insulting dago woman makin' it behind me back."

"My maid—oh, dear!" faltered Jim, dropping helplessly into the chair just vacated by her mother-in-law. "She shall be taught not to make trouble." Young Mrs. Ellerby's eyes flashed as she sprang up again and reached for the bell.

"Please don't ring. I will settle this." To her surprise Jim discovered that her husband was standing in the open door. "Bridget"—he spoke with quiet authority—"Mrs. Ellerby's maid has been accustomed to tea at this hour. Hereafter see that she has no trouble in getting it."

"Bush," cried his wife, "my maid shall leave at once. She has been nothing but a disturbing element since she came."

Bridget turned upon her. "Beg pardon, ma'am," she said respectfully, "Mr. Bush is the master, an' it is fer him to give the orders. If he says make tea for the Frenchy, the Frenchy shall have it. The family ain't grudgin' tea even to—"

"Go, Bridget," he commanded, "and at once."

"Yes, Mr. Bush." She whirled and threw back her head, striding haughtily to the door, the teapot clutched as if it were a sword sheathed in a martyr's bosom. Suddenly she burst into tears, and the door closed on a despairing wail.

"I hope you will pardon her," he said. "I shall see that your maid has no more trouble."

Little Mrs. Ellerby felt something in the air which moved her to glide through the nearest door. That something spoke in Jim's next words:

"That maid of mine is going."

## IX

"AND why," he asked good-humoredly, "should poor Anne Marie suffer for our *gaucheries*?"

"*Our*?" She let a peculiar emphasis of cold inquiry trail over the word.

"Oh, Bridget is a member of the family," he said smilingly, "and has the same failings and bad manners that we have."

"*Our! Wel!*" she retorted. "I notice how instinctively you all use the plural pronoun. But I notice that you never include me in the '*we*' or the '*our*.' Don't speak. I intend to say what I am going to. You mean that *I* must not discharge *my* impudent maid because it would inconvenience *me*, and *I* am one that must be considered and treated courteously because *I* am not one of the sacred circle called *us* whom *we* can treat as we wish."

"My dear—"

"Just a moment. Bridget is a member of the family, and she has so far broken through the family manner as actually to quarrel with the servant of an outsider, therefore *we* will not hesitate to discipline Bridget, because she is part of *us*. *We* will not allow the outsider to discharge her maid, because being an outsider, *we* must treat her with consideration."

"Jim," he said, "have I deserved this?"

"Well," slowly and trying hard to continue to be angry, "why not?"

"Of course, Jim, you know that I would never think of interfering with your management of one of your servants."

"Why not?" No need to use effort to maintain the anger now; it could maintain itself. "Just tell me, why not? Tell me!" Her voice rose. She went closer to him and looked intently into his face. Suddenly her hands went out to him and rested on his shoulders. "My love, my dear, you are worried. What is it, boy? You are afraid—of what? Tell me what it is." How much alike the brothers were, she thought, as in the face before her appeared the same wincing shame she had seen in the other, younger face as Thornton had tried to hide his confusion from her when he thought she was going to speak of the gossip at the club. She felt again the curious, loving, protecting pity with which this man had filled her from the first moment she met him. "Forgive me," she said, "and kiss me."

He lowered his lips to her lifted face. Suddenly he blushed painfully and bent his head lower. It was her hand that he seized and kissed. His fingers crushed her rings into her flesh. It was the first rough touch he had ever given her, and curiously enough it pleased her more than all his perfect wooing. Poor Jim, she was in the grip of that most relentless of all phases of loving that a woman can know, when she feels a man whom the world calls strong unconsciously appealing to her to help him.

Her fingers closed about his hand with a grasp that a strong, clean and loving boy might have given; then she laughed with caressing tenderness. "Come here," she said, and leading him to the table pointed to the plan. "Do you see that window?"

"Yes."

"That is our room, the one that looks down the valley toward the sunset. We are going to stand there, you and I, and watch that sunset every evening. It was at sunset that I met you. Do you remember?"

"Yes." He was bending low above the plan, hiding his face from her. "We were all about the fire in the big hall.

They were telling me of the new girl who had ridden so well to hounds that day." The words came slowly. He had not thought much of that day; a month ago he would have said he had forgotten all but the fact that they had met. To his surprise the scene now rose intact before him, as if his memory had really stored every detail and then veiled it away, much as a connoisseur hides with curtains his best treasure to protect it from the eye of the Philistine. But Philistines in the proximity of beauty may, all unknown to themselves, grow to that condition of appreciation which makes the connoisseur draw back the curtains. "Then," he continued, "every dog about that fireplace suddenly rushed and cast itself upon someone. Then you laughed, and I saw you standing there in the open doorway with the sunset behind you. You were trying to save yourself from the paws and tongues that were whirling about you. You were just from the saddle, and the mud was on your boots and your skirts, and yet—you seemed the cleanest thing I had ever looked upon."

"Stop!" she cried. "You stop at once, Bushrod Ellerby! You have no business to be so insidiously perfect in your lovemaking."

"I?" There was wide-eyed surprise in the face he turned to her. "Why, Jim, I wasn't making love—I was just telling you an ordinary thing that I remembered."

She let her gaze dwell on him with that brooding, veiled satisfaction of the woman who sees a clever man grow suddenly stupid in her presence. "Yes," she said, "quite so."

For some reason, and for one of the few times in his clever woman-wise life, he felt vaguely helpless, and manlike broke into another subject.

"I shall be glad when this house is done and you will not have to put up with all the annoyances and inconveniences here."

"What annoyances and what inconveniences?"

"You are used to the perfect machinery of a big house—footmen, servants of all kinds. Here your poor maid is not

even able to have a cup of tea without an explosion. And then—"

"And then?"

"Well—er—my sisters—Catherine—I hope she has not been insulting to you."

"My boy, don't look like that. If there is one thing you have got to learn it is that I am not afraid of glares. But," quickly, "I love you to glare—it seems more like being married. Yes, smile, but I mean it. That everlasting attitude of gentle consideration to which you have treated me since we were married is getting on my nerves, because I know that it is too perfect for a mere man. And I also know that you *can* row. I just hate to think of what happened when Mrs. Lawton was told you were going to marry me." She let her slow, amused smile rise into a laugh.

"Still, Jim, I will not have you made uncomfortable."

"Uncomfortable, my dear man? This is the first comfortable day I have had in this house."

"What!"

"Yes, I had a lovely row with Catherine, and I am going to have another, a bigger one. In fact, I mean to belong to this family so completely that not one of you will hesitate to come ten miles to tell me I am a fool."

"Shall I say that I am growing alarmed at your idea of happiness?"

"You will say what you please, but you will refrain from now on from treating me as if I were great-grandmother come to call, and likely to fall to pieces if handled with anything but gloves. That attitude may be well bred, but it ends in a plebeian like myself throwing plates. Now sire, my husband and lord, tell me what worries you. Is it—me? Because if it is, I'll stop it—perhaps."

"It is not you, Jim. And yet—" But he bit off the last words before they left his lips.

"What then? Somebody else? Tell me if you want to. I may not be able to do much, but I can at least think of nasty names to call it—or him—or her. I can even stand being told it's a 'her,' provided the 'her' is where she belongs—three months back."

"It is not a 'her.'"

"Then what is it—money?"

He set his lips. Even while she was trying to read him she had the feeling that it was nice to own a man whose chin was as firm as that. He battled for a moment with himself, then spoke: "It is only a business worry—which I have been able to arrange—or least I am sure I can," he added rather harshly.

"Then that ends it. If I can help you, say so. If I can't, don't. I hate a female Paul Pry."

"Oh, that doesn't bother me—I mean the business annoyance. But"—he halted, then went on—"I want you to know, and remember always, that—that—" He was so utterly unlike his usual suave self as to seem years younger. Again she had the surprise and delight of feeling that she could upset his poise. She waited, drawing the last delicious drop from the situation. "I wonder if you know what kind of man I was before you met me?"

"I know that if the Lord had wanted only angels he would not have made Adam—if that is what you mean." She added soberly: "Dear, I can forgive anything, I think, except—"

"Except what?"

"Something of which you could never be guilty."

"And what is that?"

"Of taking from a woman honor, when, understand me, it really means *honor* to her. Or for a man to sell his own. I could not forgive that. More than the woman who sells herself, I hate, loathe and despise the man who does. You know the kind of man I mean. He had always been my fear. I loved you from the very first moment I saw you because there was no mistaking your manhood, your honor. Why, your pride was so high you forced me to woo you, and I am not ashamed of it."

"I hear someone coming down the hall," he said with averted face.

## X

THERE entered to them a vision preceding a dull, cold fact. The vision was that of the angry loveliness of the

girlish Mrs. Fosdick, whose face looked out flowerlike from the peach-colored foam of chiffon lining the hood of her sweeping and sumptuous opera cloak. The "fact" was her husband, thick, stolid and in a temper. His face wore the dumb but struggling resentment of a man whose best swear words have been reft from him.

"Here we are," he cried rabidly, "and if you can tell me what is the matter with her I'd like to know it. I've done everything to please her, even to dressing at five o'clock to go thirty miles to the city for dinner and hours of caterwauling at the Opera. And," stepping around his wife's train to glower in her face, "I don't mean to let you tell your mother things about me that are not so."

She made no answer.

"What in the world can be done with a woman who won't say what she is mad about but keeps getting madder?" he shouted to the others. "And," whirling back to the person who had promised to love, honor and obey him, "you sha'n't tell your mother I have not been good to you, because I have been."

"If mother had the least affection for me," she answered, "she would treat you as a mother-in-law should. As it is, she might be your own mother. But I don't see what you can complain of in my behavior to you. I have done everything you requested today. You said this morning you wanted to see Bush. Well, there he is. Now if you will pardon me"—her husband shuddered as if she were pouring her icy politeness like cold water down his spine—"I wish to speak to Jim." She led young Mrs. Ellerby to a remote couch. Instantly the two matrons enveloped themselves in the depths of that privacy which is possible for women to create when shutting men out of the conversation.

"Take a good look at that man," breathed Mrs. Fosdick in tones masked and cloaked with mystery.

Mrs. Ellerby leaned forward with the deep feminine interest a woman shows in the object of a coming scandal. "What is it?" she whispered.

"Do you think"—cloak and mask fell, revealing horrid anxiety in all its fear-someness—"do you think that man is true to me?"

Jim took a sharper look at the thick blond youth whose face could no more conceal his thoughts than a soup plate can its contents. "He looks so—from here," she said judicially. "Why?"

"Because—don't look, he may suspect something; I don't doubt she has told him to watch carefully."

"She?"

"Netta Van Winnercoup. She was once engaged to him—the horrible, horsey thing! She is corresponding with him. I found one of her letters. I have it here." She cast a glance over her shoulder at the two men deep in conversation and cigarette smoke before the fire, then opened her embroidered bag and produced a pink envelope. "I know her handwriting—just like a coarse man's. Oh, I have failed as a wife, and I know it, but"—her eyes blazed—"it is all over! And now I am going upstairs and see whether he was with mother at the times he has pretended to be."

"How did you get that letter?"

"Took it."

"Elinor Fosdick!"

"Don't look at me that way. I wasn't going to open it, but he sha'n't have it."

"You must give it to him, child."

"I sha'n't and I won't. What business has that woman writing to my husband?" Turning her tragic eyes to the blond, stout object of discussion, she added mournfully: "I wish he were not so handsome."

"You must give him that letter."

"I won't," stubbornly but miserably.

"You must, dear."

"I can't now—he will know I took it."

"No matter. Don't begin to deceive your husband. You can tell him you found it on the hall table, and he will never know but that the butler forgot it when he brought in the mail."

"I shall not. What business has that bold thing to write to him?"

"Are you so afraid of her that you hide her letters?"

"Afraid of her!" The Ellerby temper



flared red hot in the lovely eyes. "I shall give it to him now."

"No, not now."

"Yes, now, so that I can have witnesses if he looks guilty. And if he does, I am going straight upstairs to mother, and never live with him again as long as I live." She reared to her feet. The peach-colored chiffons floated out in clouds as she whirled about and rushed to her husband. She thrust the letter at him: "That came this morning for you."

He took it in surprise. Her brother turned to her a face that had become heavy and troubled during his conversation with his relative. Jim, feeling that a desperate scene was about to unfold, hastened to the fireplace to assist in lowering the curtain in case the action became too violent.

"I took it," cried the girl. "Well, you of course know why I took it."

He looked at her, then at the letter, turned a bright red and tore it open.

His wife quivered and shrank against Jim, who put her arm about her.

"Oh," said the blond one, "I suppose you mean that somebody forgot it. I wouldn't have overlooked this for a lot." Jim felt a shudder among the chiffons. "She writes that she wants me to be the first to know that she is going to marry Billy Roberts." He raised a face of blank surprise to his wife's. "But why does she want me to be the first to know?"

Jim's arm was almost left in the air, so quickly was Mrs. Fosdick at her husband's side and reading the letter over his shoulder.

"Because," she purred like a contented kitten, "she is a dear, sweet thing, and naturally wants to tell her friends the good news."

Miss Ellerby, entering the room with the sleepwalking air of a person lost in dreams of philanthropy, was positively revolted by the look of adoration which her beautiful sister was bestowing upon her husband, and her disgust grew immeasurably as his arm went about her.

Tom Fosdick did not know what had happened to cause his wife to change, but his condition can be understood by

any man who has lain in the chilly sheets of conjugal suspicion and suddenly discovered that his wife has put upon them a thick coverlet of affection.

"Good gracious!" cried Jim, looking at her watch. "It is after six. We must dress for dinner at once, if we are going to."

Mrs. Fosdick gave a cry of horror and urged her husband toward the door. But he hung back to say to Bush:

"I know you will think better of it and join us."

"I am too busy."

"But," resisting his wife's efforts to propel him through the door, "the River House is a plague spot—wait a minute, Elinor—and if we all stand together the little politicians of the town will have to close it. We can't have a low dive like that corrupting the community."

"I can't do it—I am too busy. That is final."

"See here, Bush," earnestly and soberly, "we need you. We want you to take the case if it comes to a prosecution. Zaret shall be run out of this town. We are all determined on it. His place is not only corrupting the town boys, but the younger fellows at the club have taken to going there."

"I cannot take the case."

"Why?"

"Jim"—Mrs. Fosdick hastened to her husband's assistance—"make Bush do as Tom says. Tom is always right."

"What is this place, Tom?" asked Jim.

"A low, infamous dive." There was a good deal of decent indignation in the young fellow's tones. "Run by an ex-criminal, some say—a man called Zaret."

The door was opened by a little parlor maid whose honest face was a youthful replica of her Aunt Bridget's. All the family and relations of Bridget and Nora passed at some time through the Ellerby service.

"Mr. Ellerby, sir."

"Yes, Kathleen?" Ellerby evidently welcomed the termination of the discussion.

"A person who says his name is Zaret to see you, sir."

## XI

THE announcement was a surprise. Then Fosdick swept surprise away in the obvious explanation.

"He has got wind of what we mean to do. The servants go to his place, and we have made no secret of the fact that we were going to get you to handle the matter. Here is your chance, Bush, to help clean up this town. He is frightened or he would not come to you. Shall I go in with you and see him? When he finds that we mean business he will crawl."

"No, Tom." The tone of the lawyer reduced the matter, in spite of its unpleasant character, to a business commonplace. "I will handle it alone. As you say, he has probably heard something and has come to find out the rest. I won't take the case, but I will do all I can to help you." He glanced at the clock. "It is getting on. Jim, you go and dress; and if you young people expect to get to town in time for dinner, you had better start." He held open the door for the departure of the pair.

"I want this room, please," he said to the others. Jim lingered, but at his gesture went out with an unconscious shiver.

Without a word Ellerby opened the door, went to the writing desk, sat down and took out his chequebook. Zaret entered and stood beside him. The pen scratched for a moment, then a cheque was torn out, blotted, and pushed along the desk. The big, coarse fingers clutched it greedily, but there was anger and menace in the narrowed eyes.

"You understand," he said to the man at the desk, "he is to stay right in this town until that note is paid, principal and interest."

"I have said so," contemptuously.

"No tricks, mind. He stays right here. And I get the cheque for half your salary every payday, or God help him!"

A nod. Ellerby put the chequebook back in the drawer, and as he did so his glance fell on a stamped and addressed letter. He picked it up.

"And you are to call off this gang at the club."

Ellerby looked for a moment at the letter with its superscription in the handwriting of his wife, then he whirled about.

"Understand, once for all, to that part of it I say no!" He sprang up as the other opened his lips to shout. "Cry out once again in this house and—Look at me! Look me in the face and see if you think it is safe to make a scene in this house!"

Zaret looked, then he lowered his eyes. "Well," he mumbled, with a curious sense of outrage peeping through the tones, "I ain't bein' treated right. You could pay me the whole note any day."

"Not one cent from my wife's money. Is that clear?"

It was very clear to Zaret, very clear, so a slinking look told him.

"And you should not complain. The interest is—well, all you asked for."

"I ain't sayin' that, but as a friend you could stop that gang."

"I will not. And see here—you have spoken of tricks. If you try any with me or come here again I shall do what should have been done in the first place, set the boy before twelve decent men and then set you before them. And believe me, Zaret, I am something of a cross-examiner. Now, good night." He touched the bell.

Zaret stole one more look from under his heavy, granulous eyelids, then stifled the instinct of his calling never to leave a victim without a menace, even when the victim's cheque is in his pocket, and shuffled out.

Ellerby looked at the letter in his hand. Had Zaret seen him now he would not have been afraid to shout his loudest. Each line and stroke of the writing was just the same, also the tint of the paper, as that of the letter she had written to him three months ago, the one which had excited his sisters' scorn. But the man who looked at it was not the same who had laughed at the woman whose name was on all the fences. The face was the face of Bushrod Ellerby, but the expression, brooding, troubled and newly tender, was that

of Jim's husband. He did not know that any change had taken place in him. Like the rest of us, he was not exactly intimate with himself. "What is the matter with you?" he said to the new man in him whom he thought to be the old. "Too much work? Or is it that after all you are above your station, you paid husband?"

A silvery warning from the clock caused him to put back the letter and go upstairs.

He was struggling with a collar button when a tap at the door of his dressing room was followed by the appearance of his wife.

"For goodness sake, fasten me up the back," she cried in exasperation.

He obeyed. "You discharged your maid?" Brows drawn, lips set, he was fumbling with stiff fingers at the multitude of hooks and eyes in the lace.

"Of course," she replied, trying desperately to see over a shoulder how he was succeeding. "Three times. The rug is wet with her tears. Give me that mirror. Thanks. Good heavens, man dear, what are those mounds in the middle of my back? Undo them all and begin again."

His face as he knelt was the face with which he attacked the most difficult of legal puzzles. "You see," jerking the lace, "how dependent you are on Anne Marie."

"Yes, and she knows it, too. She is wailing in her room. I'm sure that Bridget's bonnet will be simply ruined with tears."

"Bridget's bonnet!" The words were not uttered with any surprise—he was too furiously intent on his labors.

"Yes, she is trimming it as a peace offering. I told her not to come near me until it was done and accepted. You people are not the only ones that know how to make a servant fond of them."

Bit by bit, hook by eye, he rose from his couch. As he brought together the lace just at the curve of the back's smooth dip between the white shoulders the warm satin feel of the skin ran up his fingers through his arms, and he kissed her roughly, again and again. For the second time that day he had

touched her rudely. She turned her head and looked into the smoulder of his eyes. He was collarless, and his face, even the bare, strong neck, was flushed. All her body yielded to him. She let her head rest against his cheek. That indescribable, vital perfume of young hair permeated his senses. He caught her and crushed her to him. "Jim—my Jim!" he cried defiantly—of what he did not know. Then suddenly his arms fell. "I—I beg pardon," he said very low; "I behave like a cub—I don't know why."

She laughed, because civilization has taught us to use the laugh as a veil when emotions take us by the throat. "Look at you—collarless—hair ruffled!" Her hands tossed his hair about. "Now look in the mirror. You look like nothing but a simple, ordinary, everyday man. And that is the way I love you to look."

He looked and smiled, then picked up his collar from the dressing table. "But what would Catherine say if a simple ordinary man came down to dinner?" he asked.

She sighed as she saw him transform himself from a man who might eat a dinner to a man who was about to dine.

## XII

THE dinner table showed a diminished circle. Miss Ellerby on plea of a headache was secluded in her room. Thornton's empty place frequently drew a foreboding glance from his mother. Mrs. Lawton, wrapped in silent belligerence and impenetrable mystery, contented herself with spearing to earth by steely glance or barbed word any struggles which cheerfulness might make to rise. She refused to follow the coffee and cigarettes into the library, and in company with a large morocco-bound account book withdrew to remote regions of privacy. Little Mrs. Ellerby was borne away by her eldest son for the monthly attempt to find out just how much the family bills were, and which one of the daughters was concealing any.

Jim, solitary and content, basked be-

fore the warm hearth, drawing vast diversion from the latest number of a popular fiction magazine.

She finished the story and laid down the magazine with a feeling that someone was watching her. It was Thornton. His face was a sickly, bluish white; his hair, disordered and matted, streamed down in a shock over a forehead wet with sweat.

"Oh, yes, I've been drinking," he said roughly. "Afraid of me?" he laughed. "Needn't be. I haven't got anything against you—I like you. Besides, my mind's clear enough—I know what I am doin'. Just now and while I do know I want to say that I am sorry if I hurt you this afternoon—and I apologize." He nodded to her and turned to leave.

"Wait." She got between him and the door. "Where are you going?"

"To do what I have to do once I begin—finish up. Please get out of the way, Jim. You don't understand, but when I begin I have to go on."

She had often seen the effects of liquor, and it had moved her tolerant amusement or healthy disgust. But no such thing as this had she ever seen. The boy was not drunk, but possessed by liquor as with a disease. It seemed to her that under his pallid, sweating skin she could see the raw nerves quivering with the poison. The eyes had not the drunkard's blear, but an ominous brilliancy. Hate rushed into his face, hate of the obstacle barring him from his desire, and for a single moment she was afraid. But there was no coward blood in the girl. Her quiet glance never left his face, and it was into his eyes that fear came, fear that she would call out and have him held by force from the liquor.

"You don't understand." He licked his twitching lips. "I was a fool to come here. I never have come home before. Let me go. I don't know why I came—"

"Listen." She laid a firm hand on his arm. "You came because you trusted me—as a brother should. Don't be afraid that I will call for help. I will not prevent your leaving this house tonight, if you wish to. I give you my word."

"Then let me go now."

"Not just yet, boy."

"You don't understand," he cried. "You are not talking to an ordinary drunkard."

She forced an amused smile. "You can stay for a minute or two, can't you?" She took her hand from his arm, as if even that slight token of emotion were out of place in her quiet, confident poise. "I have promised that if you wish you shall go, and in return you will give me just a few minutes. You can manage that long without it, can't you? Here." She hurried to the coffee service by the fire, poured a cup of the black, strong fluid, and turned to discover him slinking from the room. She laughed with light contempt.

He stared, then slowly came to the hearth. His face was shamed, helpless and angrily desperate—the face of a criminal bound. "Let me go," he whined.

"Drink this," she commanded, and held out the cup. But she had to guide his shaking hands to his lips before he could obey. Then the cup fell, he crumpled down into a chair and put his head in his hands. "Let me go," he whispered.

She knelt and put about him an arm as strong, as tender and as kind as a brother's, such a brother as he should have known. "You have somebody here who will never let you go—never while you live—not if you make of yourself the lowest drunkard who ever fell in the streets."

He whirled upon her, thrusting her arms away passionately. "You say that now," he cried, "but you won't say it when I am like him—my uncle. Do you know what he was?" He laughed. "Drunkard, liar, then thief and madman. I'm part of that now, and the rest will come—oh, it will come. Do you know what it means—that word 'mad'? Do you know what it means to feel that some day, sure as the sun, that is what they will call you? Do you know what it is to have in you a thing that step by step is driving you to drink, the drink that will get you in the end—hide, body and bones? You don't, because you can't. But I know, be-

cause I can feel it crawling all through me, whirling and tearing in my brain, until some day it will burst it to pieces; and then—I'll be like Uncle Bushrod. You good people," he laughed contemptuously, "you think we drink because we want to. You make me sick!" He sobbed hysterically and twisted away from her.

She drew down his hands and put a second cup to his lips. Obedient as an exhausted child, he drank. "Now"—her arm was once more about him—"I begin to see. So that is the way they thought to frighten you into good behavior? This family is nothing if not conventional, but the convention of going insane because our ancestors did has gone out." Her cool and amused voice was as a mental icepack slowly wrapped about a delirious phantom. "And now," she said evenly, "why don't you try to be really like Uncle Bushrod?" He turned and stared. "Dear me, how afraid you all are of the finest *man* in the family!" He averted his face. "I don't think you know your uncle. I do, because your mother told me the other day, as she tells me all the bright things of her old life. Your uncle, the real man, was the one who jumped over the breastworks that day at Cold Harbor to take water to the men who had just tried to kill him but had gone down before the Confederate fire and lay agonizing with thirst in the trenches. He went back and forth from the well to the field through a storm of bullets, risking his life a hundred times. When the Union soldiers at last saw what he was doing they stopped firing and cheered him. That man, the man they cheered, was your Uncle Bushrod."

"I've heard the story, but—" He broke off listlessly.

"But you mean he became— No matter what he became; it is what he was that day. What if later, in hunger and poverty and hopelessness, he took to drink? That man was not your uncle. How proudly you would have clung to his memory if he had died on that field! Well, for me and for you he did, the real man, heroic, forgiving, compassionate and kind, died that day

as absolutely as though a Yankee bullet had killed him. Why don't you try to be like your Uncle Bushrod?"

With the face of young manhood he looked up at her. "How can I be like him?" he asked. It was as if in his mind a window had been opened. The hot fumes of dissipation still hung in that mind, but from somewhere there was stealing the fresh, cool air from out of the bright day.

"How? You can't jump over breastworks, but you can jump out of this town and run away."

"What's that?" He stood up. "Say it again!"

"But," she continued impersonally, "running away means so many things. You will have to leave the club"—she paused—"and the law." His glance brightened. "And it will mean hard work, miles away from liquor."

"Where? Where can I go? Tell me—tell me where to go. I mean it, Jim. Don't be so indifferent."

"I am wondering if you have the grit—that's all," she slowly admitted.

"The grit!" angrily. "You're just like every other woman—work a fellow all up about a thing, and then slump. See here, do you know of any place? I never thought of running away. That would save all the jawing."

"I do know of a place—that is, a man; and I believe he is now trying to turn the desert into truck farms, but—"

"But! Isn't that like a woman? Jim, I just dream of one of those great big farms that you told me of."

"But this man would make you earn twice what he gives you."

"Who is he? Tell me. Don't be so mean, Jim." Excitement was taking the place of the stimulant he had craved.

Reaction came to her; the mask of cool consideration slipped; she choked off a sob with a laugh, caught his face between her hands and kissed him. Then she ran to the desk and drew out the letter she had written. "Listen." She tore it open and read:

"DEAREST:

"You are the only person I know who is always able to win a bet from the Devil. There is a boy I am fond of on whom the Devil has

bet. Some day I shall send him to you. I shall tell you nothing about him, as you will know more than I do two minutes after you have seen him."

"Whom is that letter to?" demanded her husband's brother.

"A man I love," demurely.

"Who?"

"My father." She laughed deliciously in his sheepish face, then ran to the desk, picked up a pen and began to write.

"What are you doing?"

"Adding a line to the letter:

"Here he is."

She enclosed the letter in a fresh envelope and addressed it. "You poor kid, you have got to rest tonight and slip out by the first train tomorrow, with this in your pocket. Nobody shall know. I won't tell even Bush." She gave him the letter, but to her surprise he had lost all his look of energy.

"Jim"—he turned the letter in his hands—"I can't go."

"Why?"

"No money."

"I'll lend it to you."

"No, I can't borrow from a woman."

She laughed again. "Oh, you dear, stupid, delicious family!" she cried, her eyes alight with a secret pleasure. "You may be sure that father will see that it comes back to me out of your wages. You will not be on 'salary' any more." He hesitated; the traditions of the blood do not yield in a moment. She caught his arm. "Come with me," she commanded, her eyes dancing. "There is one person who will make you take it."

"Who?" suspiciously.

"Your mother. Did you think I was going to let you run away and not tell her?"

"She'll never let me go," he said, hanging back in resistance to her efforts both physical and mental to bear him away.

"Won't she? What will you bet on it? But there, none of you know your mother. She has more character than all the rest of you put together. Come along now, not a word. We won't tell anybody else until you are miles away.

And then what a lovely row I am going to have with Catherine!"

It was some hours afterward that Jim, unable to sleep, and haunted by the fear that after all he might have slipped out of the house in the grip of the craving, rose softly and stole down the hall to his door. The door was slightly ajar. Through it came the faint light of the night lamp on the table which held the empty glass of the sleeping potion. Beside the bed knelt the little figure of an old, old woman. The shriveled hand held the powerful young one on the coverlet. The lamplight made a sort of shimmer about the gray head bowed in the prayer that was a good-bye. The observer slipped quietly away.

### XIII

As became members of the old circle, the Ellerbys had never admitted the breakfast tray into the family. The new rulers of society had the tray, as they had dinner at night on Sunday. But the old circle, like the Jacobites or the Legitimists of the Faubourg St. Germain, serve a dead dynasty, and are true to the time-honored customs. The guests of the house of Ellerby had, of course, trays sent to their rooms. From the first one had gone to Jim. Mrs. Lawton, when she chanced to pass the maid bearing it, felt the subtle satisfaction of the Celestial who by wrapping his queue about his head insults the ignorant foreigner whom he serves. The fact that her brother's wife, like the benighted foreigner, was all unconscious of the insult, gave to Catherine a satisfaction which showed her kinship to a complicated civilization.

On the morning which had seen Thornton's flight, Mrs. Bushrod Ellerby was feeling the reaction and depression apt to follow the accomplishment of a plan which seems in the beginning to have only a bright side, but which when once executed promptly turns to us sides shaded with doubt. Thoughts of misgiving sat in a circle like Job's comforters about her bed. Suppose the craving should prove too strong and the



boy be lost among strangers before he reached her father?

Jim rose, but nature refused her comfort from the day. Outdoors all was a white whirl of snow; indoors the light was sodden and gray. In spite of all attempts at reason, a chill foreboding oppressed her. Even the enticement of the porcelain and silver on the low table before the bright fire proved unavailing. She decided to join her husband at breakfast.

The fact of possessing someone on whom one has a perfect right to work off one's temper soothed Jim into amiability, after she had snapped once or twice at her husband in a manner that would have shown the veriest stranger she was his wife. She increased that amiability when she saw how repugnant it was to Mrs. Lawton, who entered hatted and booted for a trip to the city. In response to her brother's protest, Mrs. Lawton informed him that she was *forced* to go to town. And Jim felt that in some way, darkly hidden behind Mrs. Lawton's chilly politeness, she, Jim, was responsible for driving a daughter of the house out into the pitiless storm.

"And," added Catherine, as she took her departure in company with her brother, "I am expecting a visitor at five. If I am not at home, please have her told to wait."

Again Jim felt that in some manner she was responsible for that enigmatical visitor.

Her mother-in-law clung to her that morning, saying little but exhibiting a pathetic dependence. Thornton's departure was announced at the luncheon table. Miss Ellerby cannot be said to have shown much emotion. But when Kathleen bore the news to the kitchen there was an outburst of grief, which, occurring as it did in the presence of the butcher boy, sent the news percolating through the town.

Within the house the leaden hours dragged and darkened toward the night. It was late in the afternoon when Jim, carrying a message from Mrs. Ellerby, tapped at Miss Ellerby's door. The door was ajar, and opened slightly farther at the tap. Through that open-

ing Jim saw something which made her enter the room. "Are you ill?" she asked anxiously.

The woman in the girlish gown of bright pink silk who sat, head pillowed on arms which rested on the dressing table, did not move. The bright lights about the mirror shone nakedly upon the gray streaks in the dark luxuriant hair bound about with a band of pink velvet. In the whole pose of the motionless figure there was a still, desolate abandon of defeat.

Slowly when the words had drifted through her thoughts, the woman raised a face expressionless and daubed by pitiful unskill with bright rouge. "I am tired," she said, "that is all. Too tired to see visitors. Will you please tell the servants that?"

Instinctively Jim knew who it was that the woman was too tired to see. But what she could not know was that long ago a girl had hesitated, and a boy had gone away. He was married now—to a shrew, they said. He was in town on business and had sent word of his intention to come out and call. He was coming for the good-bye that had never been said, a good-bye that would be a touch of sweetness in two bitter lives; and here before the mirror was a stranger who could not give that girl's good-bye.

"I hear Catherine's step," said the woman. "Close the door, please. They would laugh if they saw me like this."

Jim obeyed her, wavered for a moment, then ran to her side. "They are cruel—cruel!" she cried in honest anger.

"No." The woman's rouged lips drew into a smile; the voice was not the fretful one Jim knew, but another, low, with a falling softness that was wistful. "I am too old for pink. But once"—she took from the table a little disk of ivory that looked as if it had come from a man's watch—"you see, I could wear it."

From the miniature in Jim's hand a girl of dark and fragile loveliness smiled. Slender white shoulders were wreathed in clouds of rosy tulle.

"They are beasts, that's what they are!" cried Jim, her eyes blazing through tears.

"No." Miss Ellerby took the miniature, and raising the lid of an ebony box, a lid ornamented with flowers in old-fashioned enamel, shut the bit of painted ivory away. "They are right, but they do not understand."

"But you are so handsome—you are—you are!" cried Jim, stamping her foot with rage. "My maid has just wept and moaned for a chance to dress your hair. Listen! I have a gown that is ages too old for me, but it would just do for you." It is impossible for heiresses always to be tactful when they are angry. "My maid shall get you into it somehow. You shall wear it—you shall! I know what you wanted to do—you wanted to see him just once, and have him see that the one he has been thinking about all the time he has lived with that sour old wife of his, and who has been thinking of him, is—is—oh, I know what you wanted. And there isn't a single mean thought in it, to him or to his old wife. And you shall do it. You take that horrid rat out of your hair while I get Anne Marie." She whirled from the room.

Miss Ellerby, shrinking, ashamed and fearful, faced the mirror. Gradually her eyes became defiant. She tore the pink velvet from her hair.

It was Mrs. Lawton's step they had heard, and in the library she now sat erect before an unpleasant person who was dressed as, and thought herself, a personage.

"But I cannot see, Mrs. Lawton, how your services are worth the figure you ask." The person adjusted a stubby ermine stole which she considered the supreme touch of elegance to her sable mantle.

"My services my friends have found to be of some value; otherwise you would not have heard of me. My duties are too numerous to mention, but, for instance"—Mrs. Lawton fixed on the stole an eye that would have made the fortune of a lion tamer—"I prevent short, fat women from wearing short fat furs." Every hair in the fur before her seemed to bristle with affront. "And"—the eye pierced the window and speared an adornment on the hat

of the furred and booted footman who waited before an enormous limousine car—"I prevent people who are not of the army or navy or the diplomatic corps from putting cockades on their footmen and so rendering themselves ridiculous."

The face of the person who had thought herself a personage flamed with scarlet anger, yet it held something of the expression with which, long ago, at her first big dinner, she discovered that she had only her soup-*spoon* with which to eat her ices. She moved in the highest shopping circles, and the mountain of egotism piled up by the flattery of sales-people had received more solid blasting in the last quarter of an hour than it could sustain without crumbling. It started to crumble slowly, and went on more rapidly under the relentless drilling of Mrs. Lawton's eye and tongue.

"I am forced to earn my living, and in the short time I have been a visiting supervisor I have been successful beyond my hopes. I do not pretend to like the work, but I do it thoroughly. My method is to call regularly, go over the accounts and see that the tradespeople are not paying commissions to the servants. I put the housekeeper in her place if she is out of it, the servants, too, if they are out of theirs. I can tell the instant I enter a house whether anything is wrong in the servants' hall."

"How?"

"If the footman looks at me. A servant's eyes should never be seen."

"I accept your terms," cried the person with a clutching eagerness, which told of subtle hazing by menials and a dreadful desire for revenge.

"Very well, madam." As she touched the bell the door behind Mrs. Lawton opened to admit Mrs. Bushrod Ellerby. "My visiting day for your house will be Thursday. And, madam, as I am now your employee"—the word was spoken with great relish—"I expect to be held strictly to account, and in that way I can hold others." She turned. "Pray do not leave, Jemima. I am through with my business."

The visitor stole quietly from the room under the wing of the parlor maid.

"I beg pardon for intruding," said the astounded Mrs. Ellerby.

"It is not a secret any longer," said Mrs. Lawton. "I have taken up the business of visiting supervisor and shopper. Since Bushrod can no longer be expected to help my mother, it was absolutely necessary. And now"—she held out a folded paper—"I must ask you kindly to take this back."

Mrs. Bushrod Ellerby looked at the cheque she had given her mother-in-law, then at Mrs. Lawton. "Did your mother tell you to return this to me?"

"No."

"Then how did it come in your possession, may I inquire?"

"I found it on mother's desk."

"By what right do you return to me a cheque which is not yours but your mother's?"

"By the right which I, a daughter of the family, have of preventing members of it from disgracing themselves."

"You are nothing if not violent in your assertions, Mrs. Lawton. I fail to see how your mother disgraces herself by accepting a small loan from her daughter."

"Pardon, did I understand you to say 'a loan from her daughter'?"

"Yes, Mrs. Lawton. And if you will permit me to say it, I am that by right of the fact that she has taken me into her heart as only such a mother as yours can. I do not mean to be offensive, but as I never have known a mother you will understand that I cannot allow your disapproval of me to make me renounce this one. You have many good qualities, Mrs. Lawton, but generosity to me, or rather to an outsider, is not one of them. I have no enmity toward you, but I have a right to be a member of this family. Your weapons are not mine. You fight with hate, I with love. I think in time you will find it is more graceful to concede me what is my right, a place in this family."

"I shall see mother."

"I must ask you to refrain from interfering in a matter which concerns only your mother and myself."

"You will find that, though you married my brother, you cannot order this house to suit yourself. My sister and I have determined—"

To say that she paused is inadequate. As well say Caesar paused when he felt Brutus's dagger. Into the room came Miss Ellerby, but such a Miss Ellerby! Not a single cat or dog of her acquaintance could have recognized her. With the unerring sweep and stroke of a great artist a violet mist draped a figure that still held some fine and slender lines, a mist so transparently diaphanous that as she moved deeper blushes of the violet came and went from the satin beneath the chiffon. There were gleams of silver embroidery, which seemed part of a quiet symphony having for its highest note the tiny spray of gray which lay like a plume in the dark ripples above a temple. That plume of gray Miss Ellerby had always concealed as best she could, but now it gave the final touch of distinction to the abundant hair, that had been parted, waved and coiled, evidently by skillful hands that loved the labor. If art had helped nature in the delicate pink of the cheeks, no man and few women could have known it. But beyond all physical adornment and enhancement, there hung about her as she moved toward Jim an air of illusive beauty, like the perfume that might linger in a folded bridal gown to say that here once lay a rose. She was no longer the unhappy woman through whose empty heart cats and dogs had prowled, but as one of whom long ago Ronsard sang, "a gentle lady, gracious and sad."

"Where did you get that gown?" demanded Mrs. Lawton.

She did not answer; she was too anxiously reading Jim's eyes. As she saw the verdict in their triumphant gloating, she smiled with the ghost of a past sweetness, and caught and pressed the girl's hands with her own white fragile fingers on which the pink nails shone, pointing their slender beauty.

"Where did you get that gown?" Mrs. Lawton insisted.

"Our Jim lent it to me."

"My heavens—you, too!" The cry

was that of a socially correct King Lear cursing a daughter.

"Miss Ellerby, Mr. Van Winnercoup is in the small drawing room," announced the parlor maid.

Unconscious through the torrential silence of Mrs. Lawton's scorn, her sister moved to the door. There for a moment she wavered. Then the woman, who had been the girl, smiled, and so went to that good-bye without which parting can have no sweet sorrow.

"Well, I perceive that this family is acting just like any other when somebody marries—" Mrs. Lawton's conventions clutched the words on her lips just in time.

"Marries money?" Jim was sparkling with good nature. "I can't agree with you. If there is one thing they do not act like, it is that. But then, you see, nobody here has married for money."

"Then what on earth did he marry you for, you utterly unattractive and common person?" inquired Mrs. Lawton's eyes.

"I know that I am an utterly unattractive and impossible person, Mrs. Lawton," said Jim soberly, reading the eyes. "But you know that once in a while my kind does get married."

"Well"—Mrs. Lawton swallowed as if her self-control had threatened to jump out of her mouth and that were the safest way to dispose of it—"I have always said—"

"Please don't. I always dislike people to tell me before my face what they should say behind my back."

"I have said to my mother that I was glad my brother was treating you with proper consideration, but I did not expect it when I heard what he said of you when he came back here from the Wilkeses' after meeting you."

"I am not interested, Mrs. Lawton, because I do not consider that you are in the frame of mind toward me which makes your repetition of what you *understood* him to say of any interest to me."

"Well, I am not surprised that you proposed to him." Jim turned to the bookshelves. "Because a great many

women have mistaken the fact that he kissed them the first time he met them for the fact that he was in love with them. He always said, you know, that no introduction was complete without a kiss." Jim selected a book, sat down by the fire and began to read. "However, I see that this family has yielded to influences which it is better not to name. I am a woman of strict moral principle, and anybody who deviates in the slightest from what I consider a moral principle I shut out of my life. Therefore I am proud to say that from now on in this family—from now on—I am the outsider." The door slammed.

Young Mrs. Ellerby put down the book, looked about the room, but saw nothing in it distinctively connected with her husband. Presently her eyes rested on the smoking table where his cigarette case lay forgotten from the night before. She rose and picked up the silver trinket, and pressed the case to her lips.

A door opened; the maid appeared.

"Mrs. Ellerby, there is a man here with a message from your husband. He says he must give it to you personally."

#### XIV

IN the hall Mrs. Ellerby found a man standing by the staircase. The maid was turning on the lights, but as yet feeble illumination revealed no more than that the figure bulked large and that there was something elusively familiar in its lines.

"You have a message for me from Mr. Ellerby?"

"Yes, lady." The voice was low but unpleasant.

"Well?"

"Could I see you in private, lady?" with a nod at the maid.

Mrs. Ellerby hesitated. The man excited a vague distaste. Then reflecting that her husband had probably sent an applicant for her charity, and that the man had the natural diffidence of his need, she signed for him to follow and returned to the library. There in the brighter light she gave a start of repugnance—she recognized the man.

"The maid misunderstood you," she said coldly. "She thought you said you had a message *from* Mr. Ellerby. You doubtless told her it was *for* him. Mr. Ellerby is not at home." She put her hand on the bell.

"Just a minute, lady. It is you I want to see."

Mrs. Ellerby did not remove her hand from the bell; she waited, astonishment growing into a sense of affront that her husband should use such a messenger. "Well?" she said peremptorily as the man hesitated.

Though Zaret hesitated, it was not from embarrassment. The hard eyes were mere bright slits of examination between the heavy lids. "Is this room private?" he asked.

"Give me Mr. Ellerby's message at once," she commanded.

For a moment he watched her, then opened his coat, and with the hitch of the short-armed stout man dove into the recesses of his garments, drew out a paper and handed it to her.

To her amazement she saw it to be a note of Bushrod Ellerby's for five thousand dollars. Her stupefaction was pierced by a stab of unformulated fear. Something in the hard, puffed face before her prompted a shudder she was unable wholly to repress. She saw that behind the man's stolidity was an active menace. Her first impulse, which was to ring, have the man put out and then go to her husband with a demand for the explanation that would enable her to help, died. The silent, heavy figure before her suggested power that had no need of the help of intimidation. She thought of her husband in connection with this man, and remembered how his face had looked the day she had questioned him. Her woman's perception told her that she was in the presence of one of those things of which we speak in whispers, but which we all think can never come into our own lives. She had asked him of what he was afraid. This, then, was the answer. She knew it without one word being spoken. No need for speech when she held what she did in her hand and looked into such a face as now watched her. The coarse, loose

lips framed in cynical folds, the heavy repellent eyes—there was the story. She saw her husband's dark, clean features with their look of refinement and breeding, the melancholy, sardonic eyes. A passion of pity came, and with it the wife's desire to shield, the woman's to protect. She raised a coldly impassive face.

"Mr. Ellerby did not send you with this," she sharply stated.

"No, lady. But it was the only way I could think of to get to you. He ain't been treatin' me right. An' I heard somethin' tonight that has made me quit foolin' any longer. And I guess you know that I got him where I want him or I wouldn't have that." He pointed to the note in her hand. Instantly she dropped it on the table, and instinctively her hand went toward the bell.

"Just a minute before you ring that bell. Things is goin' to begin that can't be stopped if you throw me outer this house. I'll drag this family in the dirt—I can do it, an' I will do it, if I don't get me rights."

"One moment, please. Change your tone at once. I am not accustomed to insolence, nor will I tolerate it."

He was used to dealing with women, was Zaret, much preferred it in fact, as being safer; yet there came to him a certain lack of ease in the presence of the cold composure of one who spoke so quietly but with such force and authority. Then, too, there was the power of her wealth behind her. Zaret in his better days had more than once been made to realize that wealth may be very powerful, no matter how powerless its possessor. He was very clever behind his bright, hard eyes, and very quick in spite of his heavy grossness. His manner altered and he proceeded to test her in another way, watching through the chinks of his lids with eyes rather surprisingly skillful in reading emotions.

"I ain't meanin' no offense, lady, an' I hope none is give or took. But I seen my lawyer, an' he tells me all I gotta do is to walk downtown an' swear out a warrant." He had her. That slow draining away of color could mean but

one thing, and it was not pride alone that made her go white, because Zaret noted the tigerish anger at him which flashed for just an instant before she thrust it from her steady eyes. She loved. That meant she would be easy for Zaret. His keen, quick little brain advised him that he must make her believe the main danger enveloped the man in whose protection she had the most interest. "I'd be sorry to see Mr. Bush in trouble, right in this town, too, where everybody knows him. But the poor has got to live as well as the rich." The sententious phrase of his calling oozed in propitiatory explanation from his moist lips. "An' if this comes out it won't be my fault."

"Has Mr. Ellerby refused to pay?" She spoke without emphasis and very quietly, but Zaret knew what it meant when fingertips resting on the table went white under the edges of the nails.

"No, ma'am. He was stallin' me along, offerin' me half his salary." The hand of compassion tore roughly at the curtains behind her eyes, but self-control dragged it away and smoothed out the curtains. "But, lady, that wasn't the agreement when he give me the note. He told me he would pay when he give it to me, otherwise I'd never have trusted him. The whole town knew that the family was on its last legs. I never would have took the note if he hadn't telephoned me he was goin' to marry you." He saw her thought and answered it. "I ain't lyin', lady. Do you think a man like me would take a promissory note from him without a reason? You see"—he pointed to the note on the table—"it's dated on the very day the engagement was announced. You was here that day, an' he told the family he was goin' to marry you. I had it from the coachman, who had it from Bridget. An' I had it before I took his note. I ain't the kind that takes anybody's word. He told me over the telephone that mornin', an' I found out if it was so before I took his note that night. See, lady; there is the date in his own handwritin' to prove it."

She did not even glance at the paper. He was not sure that she understood

him. He was reminded of the face of a woman he had once seen in a courtroom—it had the same suggestion in it that speech and sight had been struck from the senses. And Zaret was utterly surprised. Why should the lady behave like that when it was not a case of another woman? Suddenly he saw the blood flame scarlet to the temples. The silk over her breast moved as if she caught at a convulsive breath and held it. Then she was as before, still, composed and hard.

"And here," said the man, drawing out a sealed envelope, "is what he was payin' for, an' what's gotta be paid for—five thousand dollars, or I put it in the hands of the police. Want to see it, lady?" He broke the seal.

"Put that on the table." Instinctively he obeyed her. "I will pay my husband's note. Wait here."

The usual greasy smile with which he compensated his complaint victims died in its birth. Somehow he was afraid of her. He watched her suspiciously as she walked out of the room and closed the door. Then he turned and spread fat, hairy hands to the embers. Assurance grew. On the whole it was most refreshing to deal with the well bred, who did not cry or plead or haggle. Why, she had not even turned her head to glance at what she was getting for her money. There was the sport for you. Zaret sighed—there were so few sports. Then he brightened—there were so many fools. Ellerby was a fool to think he could play a trick like sending the kid away. Ellerby—that man had a nasty temper, and no regard at all for a poor man's rights. What if the lady had been made to think—Zaret hadn't said it—that her husband forged the note? Nothing about what had been done had been mentioned. Still, there was never any way of knowing about the guys who were so quiet. It would be better if Zaret left town. The gang at the club were another wicked lot. Yes, better to leave town. When the husband and wife chatted it all over, Ellerby would be grateful to Zaret for saving him the trouble of getting that money. Still, Ellerby had a wicked look—



He heard the door open, and turned to face her, then sprang to the table and clutched the note and envelope. His voice had a little shake in it as he said: "Good evenin', Mr. Bush. It sure is one terrible night."

## XV

SLOWLY an expression of fear crept over the face of Zaret and increased to terror in the silence. There was no sound but his breathing, which came in asthmatic gasps.

"Have you seen Mrs. Ellerby?"

"Yes, Mr. Bush," in eager propitiation. "An' it's all right, Mr. Bush. See here," summoning anger to support courage, "she's a lady, an' she promised to pay me just as soon as she found out I never would have trusted you if you hadn't told me you was goin' to marry—Look out! Now, I—Mr. Bush!"

The tongue went silent; then the mouth opened and the tongue came slowly through the distorted lips as the fingers of the man who had sprung on him crushed deeper into the folds of the rattling throat. The fat, hairy hands plucked and tore at the sinewy, powerful ones. The note and envelope fell to the floor and were trodden by the struggling feet. Slowly the heavy body was curved backward over the table. The head went lower and lower until the lamp shone on the death fear in staring eyes. The shoulders touched the wood; the fat hands ceased to clutch at the vise holding the throat, and spreading wide, beat on the table like the wings of a wounded fowl. The eyes protruded, glazing gradually as the arms fluttered more and more weakly on the polished wood. Then, while he could still know anything, Zaret knew that the vise relaxed, was removed. He slid from the table to his knees. Trembling, shaking, coughing and clawing at his throat, he crouched between the man and the woman who had just reëntered the room.

The husband looked at the wife. The scarlet of his rage went from brow and cheek. White and shaken as the man who moaned at their feet, he turned

from her, went to the fireplace, put his elbow on the mantel and leaned his forehead on his hand. Every line of the body was that of one who surrenders without hope of quarter.

The coughing was very loud in the stillness. Presently it diminished and the woman spoke. "Here is the cheque. Go."

The husband did not move or seem to hear. Every right he had was ended—so said his motionless figure. Zaret raised a face of puzzled outrage and ludicrous, abject terror. The fear of death had not left his eyes. He saw what she held toward him, grabbed it mechanically, staggered to his feet and lurched with frantic haste from the room.

The man by the fireplace did not look at her, nor she at him. Going down on one knee, she picked up the note and the open envelope, then rose and said without looking at him: "Allow me to pass, please. I wish to come to the fire." He drew back. She came to the hearth and dropped into the flames the envelope and its contents, then laid the note on the mantelpiece beside him. "That is yours," she said quietly.

He turned to her the pallid face of his abasement.

"Don't look like that," said her voice, gentle yet infinitely remote. "I do not blame you. It was my mistake. Do not be afraid that I shall be unjust. I alone am to blame."

"Jim," he whispered.

The intimate name had the effect of a physical touch. She shrank as if from contamination and pressed back against the table. There was a sick, dull horror of him in her face. His arms fell, the hands nerveless and open. He turned his back and stared into the fire. She did not look at him but continued: "I do not blame you. To save yourself must have been irresistible."

He turned. "To save myself? I do not understand."

She quivered and turned away her head.

"Jim, at least believe that I did not do it to save myself. It was for the boy—and mother. In one of his alcoholic

trances he forged, or was made to forge, a cheque."

"Please," she begged with weary disgust.

"You think that I am lying?" he demanded, flushing painfully.

She turned to him a glance of merciless contempt. "Please spare us both. Do not explain."

"But I must," in desperate protest. "I can't let you believe—you shall not believe, that I would use you to save myself."

"You cannot control what I believe. Please let the matter drop. It is finished for both of us."

"It is not finished while you believe me dishonored—a liar."

"You cannot help what I believe, nor can I. Please listen to me. I want to finish this subject now and forever."

"But I cannot and will not."

"I repeat that you cannot control what I believe."

His manner changed; a look of sullen pride hardened like a film over the misery in his eyes. "You are quite right. I am not entitled to make any defense," he said coldly.

"But it is still necessary to understand each other"—the anger and hardness in his face were suddenly repeated in hers—"in order that you may never be tempted to think that you can change my opinion of you. I have said I do not blame you for taking advantage of my mistake the day I offered to marry you." The blood ran scarlet to her temples, but her eyes were unflinching. "And I still mean it. But I also mean that I do not blame the kind of man you are, because you could not help doing what your kind of man does when a girl shows him that he has succeeded in making a fool of her." As if the sight of him wearied her, she turned to the mirror above a bookcase and mechanically adjusted her hair. In that mirror her eyes met his, and she unleashed her bitter anger in cold, slow words. "I don't know why I should have been such a fool. I was no *jeune fille bien élevée*, who had never seen a man. But then, you were rather original, don't you think? That withdrawal next day—

that showed quite a knowledge of the way to woo an heiress." She let a slow sardonic smile flicker about her pale lips. "Yes, very well done, and quite in keeping with your traditions." He did not reply. In the mirror they looked at each other with the complete hate of two who have loved. Gradually from his eyes the hate faded, leaving an expression of hopeless, degraded abasement. He turned and walked toward the door.

"Just one moment more." She faced him as he stood with the doorknob in his hand. "I have been unkind, perhaps." Her voice was quiet and without anger. "When I spoke of your traditions I was needlessly insulting. I had forgotten your family, whose attitude from the first has been absolutely honest toward me. Please do not go yet. We must settle some things once for all tonight."

He bowed and came slightly nearer.

"I wish to make our positions clear. I don't mean to be harsh. After all, there was no reason why I, without birth or beauty, should prove an exception to the fate which always threatens a woman with money."

"What do you wish me to do? Free you?"

"You can't free me."

If there was in his eyes an unformulated hope, her next words destroyed it.

"Don't mistake me when I say that, but try to understand. That is the only kindness you can show me now."

"I will try," he said, as if from a throat gone dry.

"I am the daughter of a man to whom you and yours would refuse the name of gentleman, but he is a man of honor. He went absolutely to ruin once because his word, though got from him by trick, was still his word. I have given my word, and do not think that I am emotional when I say I have given it, not alone to you, but to God. I come of a class that has found faith a necessity." She drew back her head and her eyes were defiant. "Also I am too proud to blazon to the world the fact that I have been a fool, and have only the fool's refuge."

"What do you wish to do?"

"I want your name. It will at least

protect me from others. I will live in the same house with you, but never as your wife from this moment. We can make some sort of deception while we are here. When the new place is finished it will be easier. Let us spare your mother what we can, and economize all the pain possible by keeping it to ourselves. You may order your life as you see fit. I will try to make the best of mine. I know that your traditions will prevent you from any outward affront to me as a woman or as your wife. That is all I ask of you. And in return you will find that I am not ungenerous. I will divide with you the money for which you married me."

He flushed again, then went white and hard. "In other words, you will make of me your paid husband?"

"The term is yours, not mine," she said, and their glances crossed like swords.

"But that is what you would make of me."

"And what have you made of me?" Her cry threw an angry light across her bitter desolation. "You wonder that I do not believe you when you say you were not in that creature's power, you, the man I loved, who have stolen from me, tricked from me my girlhood, my wifehood! Yes, I loved you—loved what I thought you were. Does it hurt you to hear it? Then hear more. I don't care if you did or did not forge that cheque; you have stolen from me my dreams, my hopes, my belief in life—and the man I thought was my husband. *You* are not my husband. The low creature who was in this room just now is a better man than you. His game at least takes courage. What courage did it take to play yours? To use the art that you have learned so well to make a girl sell herself—a girl who believed in you because that art was so perfect that she thought it honesty! Yes, you made me sell myself. And you sold yourself, too. And we are tied together now in a bargain that can't be broken. Do you think that a divorce would free me? I'm tied to you—to the memory of your kisses, of the touch of your hands, of all the skillful loving that my money paid for!"

He gave an ejaculation that was a cry of pain. But she, hating him as only a woman can the man she has loved, continued in an abandon of cruelty:

"Can't you understand of what I am thinking now? The first moment we were alone after the wedding. You said you could remember our first meeting." She laughed. "Well, I have my memories, too. We were alone. I was afraid, ashamed, as a girl is. I dared not look at you, dared not even think. I was feeling that touch of awe and shrinking that every woman knows—not from you—I loved you with all my heart—but it was of life I was afraid. Then you took me in your arms so tenderly that I felt I would never be afraid of life while you were with me, you who were so strong, so compassionate, so clean of heart. I adored you—I *adored* you!" She covered her face with her hands.

"Jim!"

The hands that had risen to cover the helpless misery of a tortured child fell to reveal the bitter face of a woman. "Don't touch me! If you are ever tempted to touch me again, remember I am thinking of the other times you have done so, and that memory defiles me, because the touch of your hands and your lips was paid for!"

His face grew as bitter and cruel as her own. "You are right," he said cynically; "they were paid for. But not in the way you think. I did marry you for your money. You may think that I needed it to cover a felony if you please. I refuse to defend myself. You speak of the first moment we really met as man and wife. I remember it well, and I have come to think that that moment is the one in which the man and woman shape their future lives. I remember how your eyes looked at me—your girl's eyes. I thought as I looked at you that those eyes were saying you trusted me and believed there was nothing in my heart that was not right and clean and honorable. I had lived as men live, thought as they think, but it seemed to me when I put my arms about you that I shut out the old life, the old thoughts. I said to myself: 'Here is another life, a fresh one; and please

God, you and I shall live it as He meant it to be lived—when He made mothers.' You say that I have been paid, and so I have—in *shame* for the trick I played on the woman I love. Yes!" he cried fiercely, advancing toward her. Every shrieking nerve tore at her, telling her to fly from this maddened stranger. "Do you think I'll consent to live in the same house with you—see you every day—and keep away from you?"

She was paralyzed with fear of him. He came close to her. She stood motionless, defenseless, while her frightened brain cried out for help to her silent tongue, her useless, nerveless limbs. It was as if some hideous peril had arisen before her in some place beyond reach of help.

"Do you think I could keep away from you—you who have lain in my arms—you who have been *mine*—every beat of your heart, every pulse of your body—mine—mine! You call me your paid husband! You say that my kisses have been paid for!"

She staggered back from his clutch—her averted head, the outstretched repelling arms, even the gesturing hands, instinct with loathing and repulsion which drove him mad. He rushed at her, burst through the fighting arms and crushed her against him.

"Well," he cried, "here is a kiss that has not been paid for—and there—and there—and there!" He bruised her face, her neck, and disheveled her hair with his kisses, while she beat him full in the face with all her desperate, waning strength. "Now," he laughed, "those have not been paid for! Good-bye!"

He threw her from him and left her.

## XVI

"WHAT do you mean by sitting down on the nail keg?"

The person addressed removed an unlighted pipe from his mouth and stared at the businesslike hat and determined face suddenly appearing at his feet through the square hole in the floor, which hole was the opening of an unfinished staircase.

"Are you the caretaker?" demanded the head.

"Yes'm."

The head rose from the hole, and with it the trimly tailored figure of Mrs. Lawton as she climbed the temporary stairs. "Then what do you mean by sitting down?" she demanded.

"Eh, lady?" said the man.

"Don't you realize that you ought to be running from place to place in this building, seeing that nobody steals anything?"

"I gotta sit down some time, lady."

"No impertinence! Go downstairs and see that the ladies do not fall into holes. Angelica! What do you mean by leaving Jim?" This to her sister's head slowly rising through the opening.

"She is with the architect," replied Angelica.

"Good heavens! He is in such a maze of misery because she insists on turning the place into a hospital that he will never notice if she falls down a fireplace. If anything happens to her you will be responsible."

"I can't say I am surprised at you, Angelica, for encouraging her to come and break her neck, but if we take her home dead, don't ask me to tell mother."

"You seem to be encouraging her, since you are here, too."

"I am doing nothing of the kind. As she is a member of the family, I wish to be seen in public with her as often as my business allows, to show this town that I uphold her absolutely and have no sympathy for the scoundrelly way my brother is treating her."

"How do you know how he is treating her? She never says anything."

"Angelica, there are times when you are so foolish that positively you frighten me. Where is he, may I ask?"

"Mother said he was in the West. He writes to her. He went away to recuperate after he won the suit."

"Ah! That does not deceive me. At this moment he is probably kissing strange women while his wife is tumbling off the scaffolding of a building."

"I wish you would not so continuously abuse him. I don't like it, and I am sure it is annoying to Jim."

"Well, all I can say is that if Jim had any sense she would get a divorce. Great heavens, what are divorces for but to get? She has no spirit whatever. She should have warned him in the beginning, just as I did Irving." She broke off at the sound of voices below and rushed down through the hole.

"Mrs. Lawton," cried a frantic but super-refined voice at the sight of her, "I cannot consent to the change you suggest in the Gubb house. The expense and loss of time would be too great."

"You should have thought of that before you put up carvings containing a bar sinister around the Gubbs' library. Now I am a woman of business, Mr. Vanclose, and it is my business to see that no mistakes are made in that house. If you are through talking business with Mrs. Ellerby, we can motor down to the place and I can show you how it is to be changed. Jim, Angelica is upstairs—that is, unless she has fallen into the cellar. Take care of yourself until I can come back and look after you. Come, Mr. Vanclose."

Firm footsteps attended by dainty, hesitating ones were heard going away over the boarding beneath as through the square of the opening Mrs. Bushrod Ellerby slowly mounted to the upper story. There was little in this colorless, cold and reserved woman to suggest the buoyant Jim of a few weeks ago.

Miss Ellerby advanced solicitously. "You are sure you are not tiring yourself?"

"Quite."

"Look at that view." Miss Ellerby pointed out through posts that indicated where a window was to be at the bright valley stretching away under the warm spring sunshine to a sky already lightly touched by the tints of the coming sunset. "When I think of how the poor convalescents will enjoy it—"

"Yes," gently interrupted Mrs. Ellerby; "no doubt they will enjoy it." She sat down listlessly on the nail keg.

Miss Ellerby began some embarrassed flutterings which might have passed as an examination of the bare boards and uprights. "So good of you, Jim, to turn this into a convalescents' home."

"I am tired of the convalescents, Angelica, if you don't mind," returned her sister-in-law, gazing at the long shadows and bright, hot sunlight on the expanse of rough board flooring.

There was silence for a few minutes; then, "I think this is perfectly outrageous and dangerous!" cried Miss Ellerby. The other turned listlessly to see her sister-in-law holding up a bit of burnt cigarette. "Look! The caretaker has been smoking. He will end by burning this place down."

"I wish he would," said Mrs. Ellerby.

Angelica, obsessed by the discovery of turpitude, advanced and held out the cigarette stub. "See! Take it and confront him with it!"

"Please, Angelica, throw it away," said the other impatiently. Then in an altered tone, but with little interest, she added: "Give it to me." Her head bent above the burnt morsel; then a surprised and wondering face was raised to her companion. "Why, that is one of father's cigarettes!" she cried.

"Impossible."

"I tell you it is!" in growing excitement. "I know it by that little gilt mark—his private mark. His cigarettes are made especially for him, and every one is stamped like that. He must have been here!" She rose from the keg. "Those cigarettes are his special pride. He never gives them away, unless it is to somebody he is very fond of—and there is nobody here he could be fond of."

"There are some more!" cried Angelica, pointing an excited finger.

"Why, they are littered all around this window! He must have smoked dozens!" cried the startled Mrs. Ellerby. "Oh, he has come—he has! I thought he was so cruel not to come, or write to me." She ran to the opening of the stairs.

"Where are you going?" asked the other.

"Home. He may be there by now."

"And if he is there, what are you going to do then?"

"Why," slowly, "I—shall go back with him."

"To your stepmother?"

Mrs. Ellerby hesitated. "There is no place for me anywhere, it seems," she said miserably. "But I must go home."

"You will not find your father there."

"How do you know? What makes you say that?"

"Because I know. And Jim, you are mistaken. There is a place for you—with us. You wouldn't leave mother, would you?"

"That is just why I am going."

"What!" Disappointment sounded in the brief query.

"Yes," defiantly; "as long as I stay I separate her from—from her son. You don't know how fond of her I am—but—it seems I have to give up what I love—what I am fond of; and I will not keep her any longer from him. I can't forget, for all her sweetness to me, he is her son."

"And your husband."

"So you are going back on me, too?" cried the other, a little color rising. "But then you are right to do so. He is your brother." Her face paled again. "You have all been very dear and kind and loyal to me, but after all I have no place with you—I'm an outsider." She sat down on the keg again and held her chin in her hand. "There is no place where I belong. I thought father would stand by me, but he has never even written—he has treated me shamefully." A slender boot tip began to tap. "And now that he has come, after weeks of silence, it is probably just to side against me."

"But he hasn't come—or we would know it." Miss Ellerby drew near and hesitatingly put her hand on the bowed shoulder. "And dear, I have a message for you," she said timidly.

Instantly the other's look became hard and cold and relentless. "I refuse to receive it."

"Why should you refuse to receive a message from Thornton?"

"Thornton? Oh!"

There was not much encouragement for Miss Ellerby to proceed, but she took a letter from her purse. "Don't you care to hear it, Jim?"

"Oh, yes," listlessly.

Miss Ellerby unfolded the letter and read:

"Tell Jim that what Bush said is true. I forged that cheque, but I did not know what I was doing—"

"Stop!" Mrs. Ellerby flamed and stood erect. "How dare you? You are playing his game for him. What do I care what the boy did? It was what your brother did to me. Tell him for me that I despise him more than ever for causing that letter to be written."

"He did not cause it to be written. He does not even know that Thornton wrote it."

"I don't believe it. How did the boy find out I even knew of the forgery? I never told anyone what happened, not even you, when you were pretending to be kind to me in order to win my confidence and betray me," she said bitterly.

"Your father made Thornton write that letter."

"My father! You are all against me—even my own father. But I tell you—and you tell your brother—that never, never have I loathed and despised him as I do now. Tell him that every day I hate him more and more." She threw up her head and scored with angry miserable eyes the traitor before her.

"I will tell him," said Angelica coldly. She shrugged her shoulders and walked away to the window. But after a pause she returned. "Listen, child," she begged, in a voice that was now often very sweet. "I spoiled my life because I was proud. And I have lived a great many years with that pride unlowered, but I have lived those years alone." With a return to her harder manner she continued: "Men are fools, my dear, and so are women when they take them seriously. I have lived a long time, and saved a great many cats and dogs—and I have no doubt they are entered to my credit in the Judgment Book. But I would give every cat and dog in the world"—she smiled humorously with self-directed sarcasm—"for one big shoulder and the legal right to cry on it. I am not going to waste sympathy on you. You have come to the time when you have got to decide for yourself



whether you want a place in life or prefer to be an outsider."

"I have decided."

"Very well, then. But make no mistake as to what is going to happen to you."

"What?"

"What inevitably happens to the woman who throws away the man she loves."

"I despise him. I never want to see his face again."

"Is it because you never want to see his face again that your own face is growing day by day more wan—and wistful? I used to think you were pretty, but you are not so now."

"Who cares whether I am pretty or not?"

"Bush. He loves you."

"He! I don't want that kind of caring—or loving."

"Don't you? Well, if you can't take a bad pattern and try to cut it to suit yourself, you have no woman's instinct. You came into our lives and helped us all, but when it comes to making your own life, helping yourself, you are just like a fortune teller who tells a man how to make a million and then is glad to get a quarter in return."

"I tell you I am through with him!" She struck her clenched hand on the keg.

"What if he did marry you for money? It is not for your money that he wastes his vacation in that window smoking your father's cigarettes."

"What!"

"Yes. Your father wrote to him to come out there and talk it over, and before he left gave him a big lot of cigarettes and told him to smoke and enjoy himself and do nothing until you came to your senses."

"My father said that! Oh!" The girl's voice trembled with anger and despair. "Well, so be it. That decides me. Now I will give you a message for your brother. Tell him I realize my mistake. I shall apply for a divorce. I am a woman of moral principle, and when people fall away from me that does not change me." Mrs. Lawton herself could not have spoken with firmer determination. "I will tell you, since you have chosen to intrude in my affairs,

that far from eating my heart out for your brother, as a matter of fact I have been slowly tearing him out of my life. Every bit of love I ever had for him is dead. Nothing can change me. I shall divorce him."

Determination rang in every vibrant word. The sunset silhouetted her proud figure. Down in the shadows of the valley night was gathering to rush out over the world. The far hilltops and the sweeping crimson of the sky alone held the glory of a day that had faded. Angelica sighed at the unflinching purpose in the set face.

A man's foot trod the stairs. Slowly, with the absolute poise of positive but unaffected dignity which marked the descendant of a class accustomed to power and privilege, a dignity emulated by men, admired by women, Bushrod Ellerby, smoking one of his father-in-law's cigarettes, mounted through the opening into the last radiance of the waning day. As his foot touched the flooring her shadow lay across his path. He raised his head and saw her. His jaw dropped; the cigarette fell from his lips. Then the suave man of the world, the confident kisser of strange women, looked so stunned with frightened surprise, so stricken, awkward, miserable and helpless, that Angelica gave a groan of contemptuous despair, and abandoning all hope, fled down through the opening and was gone.

He looked at her, he, the most hopeless figure to handle a crisis that mind of man or woman could conceive.

"Ah—is that you?" said the man of the world.

She looked at him, the man who had married her for her money, the man to whom she had proposed, the man who had tricked and deceived her and made a mock of all her girlhood dreams; and in that moment she knew that destiny had handed her the sword of revenge. The man of strong passion and violent anger who had cast her from him was not this man in whose face she read of dragging, empty days and slow, lonely nights. Her lips opened.

"Yes—it's me," said a small, weak voice.

"Oh!" said the man of the world with idiotic vacancy.

Then principle, arguments, relentless pride—one and all she left behind her and went to the man whose eyes said he needed her.

"Can you ever forgive me?" she quavered; and then without waiting to see whether he could or not, she hid her face against the shoulder on which she had the legal right to cry.

The sun, with red and angry face, scornfully sank beneath the hills, as if in disdain of a man and woman with so little "moral principle."

The lingering light died from the valley. Out in the mellow dusk tiny night things sang the mating songs of the springtime. The curtains of the sweet, intimate darkness slowly fell and were as slowly parted by the long pale fingers of the peeping moon.

"By the Lord Harry!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Why, Jim, do you know the sun has set? And we never watched it from that window!"

"Never mind," she whispered. "Let us forget the sunset and look to the sunrise—for a new day of love and understanding."



## EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME—

By Carl Holliday

THAT most people who build air castles forget to provide themselves with a ladder.

That "artistic temperament" in a genius is plain "nerves" in common folks.

That the world's a bakery—it roasts its thinkers and toasts its jokers.

That a team of mules pull together better than a man and wife because there is but one tongue between them.

That an audience is like a wheel—the longer the spoke the greater the tire.

That the reason Darwin is so unpopular is because he took all the glory out of pedigrees.

That there are no ideal marriages. I thought I had discovered one when the grass widow married the vegetarian; but, alas, their children all died of hay fever.



"MERCY on us!" said the old lady with the steel rim specs. "I don't see why they talk so much about railroad men being impolite. I'm always reading about civil engineers."

# LOVE SONNETS TO THE SUN

By Archibald Sullivan

**M**Y golden Lord, this dull and tearful day  
That brings you not lies heavy on my heart;  
I see no amber carpet for you laid,  
Or the gray portals of your palace part.

Not all the tinted lamps with yellow eyes,  
That light my pale embroidered walls the while,  
Can glow your memory brighter in my heart,  
Or flash the golden glitter of your smile.

My emeralds faint for every dearth of love,  
My rubies quiver like a thunderous sea;  
Come forth my Golden Lord and kiss my lips,  
Then light again my jewel fires for me.

## II

They did not see him come; his golden slippers  
Were like a whisper through a silken way;  
And when he passed I saw the fountain brighten,  
As glows the dawn beneath the gems of day.

He kissed my hair and passed long mellow fingers,  
Perfumed and river sweet, across my ears;  
And all his form shone treble in my jewels,  
While for his throat I wove my lover tears.

At noon he kneeled to me as though in worship;  
His kisses ringed and sweetened o'er my hands;  
He seemed my slave safe bound among my cushions  
With golden collars and wide amber bands.

At dusk he left me, stealing like a lover,  
Slow and reluctant, gathering up his gold,  
As some wise merchant from the farthest desert  
Toils with embroideries heavy, fold on fold.

Gone were his gifts—his shimmering chains and caskets,  
His treasure brightness gone, his amber curls;  
And yet I know tonight the Moon, his brother,  
Comes to my side to comfort me with pearls.

## THE SMART SET

## III

Long ere the moon upon its silver horn  
 Has musiced all the little stars to place,  
 My Lord, in many veils of red and blue,  
 Screens from my eyes the glory of his face.

A farewell smile of sapphire, one last kiss  
 Of burning crimson, one last honeyed word,  
 Then sinks he down upon his opal couch  
 Of rainbow cushions by the breezes stirred.

Oh, mists of blue, oh, sinking light of day,  
 Oh, couch of love all star-bedecked and pale,  
 What other lips are waiting for my Lord,  
 To kiss his golden eyes behind the veil?



## GOD'S GARDEN

By Stokely S. Fisher

OH, ferny crags and gaunt oaks old and gnarled,  
 Fresh greenwood flushed with wild, immortal youth,  
 Great lichened rocks, sublime in strength uncouth,  
 Enthroned o'er sands of gold with shells impearled;  
 Long slant of shallows bright with waters curled,  
 Cool valley blithe as festal bridal booth,  
 All bloom to lighten and all song to soothe!  
 Oh, happy world! Oh, happy, happy world!  
 In Eden's dew I heal my fevered feet;  
 I kiss the lily and my heart grows clean;  
 I breathe the rose's sigh and life grows sweet.  
 Nothing of bitter nor of small nor mean  
 Profanes. God's garden is the space between  
 His home and earth; lo, here the two worlds meet!



CYNICISM is not a result of bitter knowledge of the world—it comes as a consequence of what you find out about yourself.



ONE-HALF the world doesn't know how the other half can own motor cars.

# THE POWER OF THOUGHT

By Elizabeth Jordan

“YOU see, Katie,” concluded the Professor, “it comes to this: It is not right to keep everything for ourselves, when we have enough and others have so little. We must share our blessings with those who need help.”

He spoke patiently but wearily, like those who consign a bald truth to an irresponsible vacuum. He knew that his words made as little impression on the stubborn mind to which they were addressed as a peashooter would make on an armored cruiser. He had been trying to reach the elusive mentality of Katie for half an hour, and the sole results of his painfully manipulated logic were redder cheeks, a more doggedly set jaw and a more stolid glaze to the eyes of his faithful domestic.

As offset to this insensibility of Katie’s brain to truth, no matter with what nudity it was presented to her, stood her Spartan loyalty to his aged wife, whom he had laid away in the village cemetery only the year before. Katie had been “good” to her—just as she was “good” to him. He admitted the fact with a hopeless sigh. Affection ought to lend an edge to the mind. Yet, through decades of admirable service, she had ruled them both with the iron hand of the kitchen autocrat, and with the same tragic insensibility to truth in any abstract form. Until his wife’s death, Professor Trent bore it all for her sake. No one but Katie could have understood and coped with the hourly exactions of that agonized and despairing invalid.

But Katie had centered on him, since the decease of her mistress, the attention and the service formerly divided between them, and there had been moments

when, writhing under her unconscious tyranny, the old man had recognized that Mrs. Trent had gained one thing, certainly, by dying. He lived on, eating the simple and wholesome dishes Katie set before him; taking the tonics Katie was sure were good for him; going to bed at nine o’clock because Katie, for whatever mystic reason, recognized nine as the inevitable hour for that function, just as he rose obediently to a renewed endurance of her when her prosaic knuckles beat on his bedroom door at seven the next morning. The Professor, with the surviving hardihood of youth, liked pie and sausages and wheatcakes. Katie stolidly forced on him boiled eggs and toast and velvety creamed chicken. Two large cups of coffee for breakfast had been his just portion for fifty years. Life without them was like some clogging in the mechanics of the simple life. In their stead Katie ruthlessly dealt him an unstimulating cup of cocoa. At times his very soul seemed to utter a basic cry for doughnuts. When the cry became articulate Katie conceded him a meager cookie. When he plead for the stimulus of cider, his kitchen Nemesis sternly drowned his desire with a glass of hot malted milk.

Professor Trent was almost eighty years of age, and, when driven to the wall, he grimly reminded himself that, after all, nothing mattered much at that age. But he was still mentally vigorous, and with only a few of the corporal ills of an octogenarian. The joy of life, if it did not boil in his simple, childlike heart, still simmered there. The generosity that had always given with utter spontaneity seemed even to have gained momentum from the weight

of years. To avoid wear and tear, he bore with Katie, but he was tired of living alone; tired of doing nothing for humanity, since his enforced retirement from the educational field; tired of seeing life rush by him while he sat aloof. He had determined to help the workers, if only vicariously. Following close on that decision, his opportunity had come.

Sitting in his armchair out on his vine-wreathed veranda in the lulling peace of the summer afternoon, he looked at and beyond the distant hills, watching idly the flight of a hawk, wheeling, a vital silhouette against the cloudless blue of the sky, and waited with the patience of his years for his servant to speak. She did not do so with alacrity. Sense of some impending calamity temporarily swamped her autocracy. To do her justice, she was not thinking merely of herself. With the house turned into an asylum for the homeless and the friendless, how could she look after the Professor properly?

"How manny did yez ask to come?" she finally demanded guardedly.

"Only three—to begin with." The Professor added the last words with a twinkle in his eye. He was beginning to enjoy his new sense of power. After all, it was his house. He could ask to it whom he chose, and as many. Katie lifted her gingham apron and gazed sternly at the hem of it, but it was not the check on the apron that she saw.

"Is it beggars they are?" she asked at last.

The Professor's calm brow clouded. He removed his eyes from the eternal hills, which the early shadows were already beginning to tone into more pensive repose, and fixed them on her, who, whatever else she might be, was temporal.

"Certainly not," he said austere. "They are gentlemen who will be my guests. I expect you to treat them with the utmost respect. They have no money, but they are men of talent—perhaps even of genius. One is a young artist who is going to paint a great picture. The other two are inventors. When I heard of them, and of their urgent need for a quiet place where they

could live for a time without expense, I invited them here. It is our opportunity Katie," he added insinuatingly, "to give a hand to those who need it."

Katie looked with more pregnant regard at the red, toil-reddened member which was still grasping the corner of her apron. She would like to give those men a hand. She knew just how, and where.

"An' phwat'll they be afther doin' whin they get here?" she demanded, still in glowing rebuttal of undesired opportunities.

"They will *think*," the Professor declared convincingly.

"*Think*, is it? Sure, *that's* aisy." Katie knew this. She was thinking herself now, without any effort. "Phwat'll they be thinkin' about?" she added, a dawning interest in her eye.

"She's coming 'round," the Professor told himself exultingly, and he answered her in gratifying detail.

"They'll be thinking about their work," he proclaimed sonorously. "The inventors are on the edge of a big, beneficial change in connection with railroad engines. They will naturally think about that. The artist believes that if he could afford the time to put one of his conceptions on canvas, he could paint a wonderful picture. My home will be quiet and restful enough for any amount of thought," the Professor murmured, looking around him and speaking with conviction. "They're coming tonight," he added, delivering the blow neatly but firmly. To have the courage of conviction before Katie's masked batteries was encouraging to himself. It was a declaration of hostilities.

Katie's interest in ideality, exotic and attenuated at best, perished as a soap bubble bursts. Her voice broke forth in acrid protest.

"They'll be trackin' me clane floors, an' atin' yez out of house an' home, an' smokin' up th' curtains, an' kapin' yez up late nights, an' gettin' yez into bad habits. Ohone, sorry am I to see this day!" she ended with a gulp.

"That will do, Katie." The calm restraint in the Professor's voice had a quality in it Katie heard with awe. "Go



inside now and get things ready for my guests, and see that you treat them with the utmost respect and consideration."

Katie went, benumbed into voiceless overthrow. She groaned as she entered the wide central hall of the big old house and took in the immaculate order everywhere with a creator's appreciation. She groaned again as she crossed the threshold of her spotless kitchen. She groaned with still more eloquence when she sat down to plan an evening meal for three strange men, who had turned her kingdom into an inn.

"They'll ate us out av house an' home," she muttered again. Then an idea struck her with a force which made her sit up, while her small, shrewd eyes flashed, as if from its impact.

"I'll let thim!" burst out exultantly. It was her "Eureka," and she set to work with a vigor that belied her sixty years. "P'raps *that'll* bring him to his sines."

It must be confessed that Katie's darkest surmises as to the character and influence of the expected guests seemed confirmed by their appearance. They were a forlorn and tousled group, unshaven, not overneat as to linen, and absent-minded to a degree that soon drove the hot-tempered Irish woman to the verge of frenzy. The entire baggage of one of the inventors seemingly consisted of a shoe box, to which he clung with a touching solicitude, hard to understand until it transpired that it contained a certain chemical essential to his experiments. He kept this in the bathroom, and spread it lightly over the plumbing. The artist carried a more impressive amount of hand luggage, which, being carefully "gone over" by Katie the following morning, proved to be blocked-in canvasses, paints and brushes. All seemed to think with a new activity—the painter in the barn, the inventors in the comfortable old attic, to which Katie had consigned them on the morning following their arrival, after a brief, horrified inspection of the condition to which they had already reduced their bedrooms.

"Yez can *sleep* here," was the ultimatum she delivered after a pregnant

silence, the reason for which when declared relieved the tense consciousness of the guests. "But yez'll do your *thinkin'* in the attic an' the barn; an' yez'll take yer dirty pipes there, an' yer powders an' yer paints an' yer other messes."

This arrangement, which Professor Trent artlessly assumed to be their own specialized selection, left the house fairly free of them by day. His faithful domestic further insured his comfort by telling them that he was a little "quare," and that his hospitality did not extend to graceful acquiescence in the disturbance of his personal privacy. They followed this intimation so effectually that the Professor rarely saw them at all. He attributed the fact to the well known eccentricities of genius, and settled contentedly into his old routine, delighted to learn that goodness to one's fellow men does not swamp one's individual life. Katie would have been stoically resigned had the guests revealed any sense of domestic meaning to the passing hour. Like the poet, however, they took no heed of time, save by its flight, and it was borne in on her that to expect them to appear regularly for meals was like expecting eagles to assemble for dinner at the sound of a brass gong. They might be trained to this, possibly. Katie was ignorant of an eagle's capacity for being trained. But the utter immunity of Trent's guests to domestic method appalled her resolute but simple soul.

As they would not come to her, therefore, she imitated Mahomet's neat method of *rapprochement* between himself and an immovable object: she went to them. Three times a day she bore to attic and stable three huge heaped-up plates, each containing enough food for a giant with a giant's appetite. The result approved her sense of proportion, and slightly lightened her toil in cleaning the dishes. Sometimes, however, Katie, arriving with the evening meal, was disgusted to find the noon repast still standing where she had left it. She always left it there still, carrying the hot dishes back to the kitchen, to be warmed over and presented for breakfast. In time, such is the force of habit and ap-

petite, the absorbed workers in attic and barn realized that steaks and roasts and chicken have more lure hot than cold. They learned to consume Katie's viands before their pristine charm had vanished, though, to the end of their visit, *when* they consumed them remained a mystery on which Katie Ryan firmly refused to let her thoughts dwell.

In the meantime she was carrying out her dire plan. Professor Trent's guests were fed on the best the rural market offered, and as they absently ate everything put before them, much as one shovels fuel into a furnace, the bills rendered at the end of the first month were sufficiently startling to satisfy even Katie. For a moment her thrifty soul tottered at the size of them. Then, with a wicked glint in her eyes, she took them to her employer.

"I'll be afther troublin' yez for a cheque to pay thim, Perfesser," she said Spartanly. Her eyes gazed placidly into space; undisturbed peace of mind radiated from her round, stolid face.

Professor Trent looked at the bills, blinked and just escaped looking at her. He caught the startled ejaculation his tongue quivered with; only a chickenlike peep escaped him.

"Very well," he said, almost too judicially. He went to his desk, wrote out the cheque, returned and handed it to Katie, who seemed to herself to have shrunk physically during this unruffled performance. The Professor calmly resumed the newspaper he had been reading, having settled his eyeglasses on his nose with deliberate placidity. Katie ignored this intimation that the interview was over.

"Did yez—did yez notice the *size* of the bill, Perfesser?" she asked, with a diffidence at which she inwardly revolted. "Belikes yez signed it without lookin'." "T'was somethin' *awful*!"

"Oh!" The Professor spoke casually, not raising his eyes from his newspaper. "It is larger than usual, of course. Did you expect the bill for five persons would be the same as for two? We have guests."

"We have that!" contributed Katie venomously. "But shure yez knows

we can't stand no such bills as thim! We ain't got the money!"

"Oh, well, we must find it." The Professor spoke with careless cheerfulness, his eyes still on his newspaper. "If we run short, I can raise money somewhere."

"To feed *thim*!" Katie's tone dripped with eloquence. "I believe ye'd do it," she added, "av yez had to sell the roof over yer head!"

There was no response. The Professor's placid absorption in his paper was in the nature of a dignified censure. For a moment she hung oscillating between conscience and fear.

"I done ut," she at last said doggedly. "I made ut as big as I could, a-purpose."

"I wouldn't do that." The Professor raised his eyes, but he spoke impersonally, as one who deprecates a needless idiosyncrasy. "Don't be extravagant, but, of course, be generous. Above all"—he pointed a lean finger at her—"don't change the rate. It's too late, Katie. You started this misguidedly, but through respect for me you've got to keep it up. Otherwise it would look as if we tired of them. Continue to feed them better than was necessary. You have *made* that necessary."

Katie retired, a blighted conspirator, hoist by her own petard.

"He'll be watchin' now to see that I feed thim like fightin' cocks," she told herself, with the bitterness of unpleasing truth; and she was right. Had he intended to punish her, he could have chosen no better revenge than this subtle one of making Katie Ryan continue to feed her arch enemies on porterhouse steaks and similar delicacies, at a cost to her guileless charge which he could ill afford. She obeyed orders. When a mild man does take a stand he is inexorable. But the strain was too much for her. She drooped visibly and lost flesh, while ever before her troubled eyes the amounts of the grocer's bills seemed taking flights heavenward. She thought in money. A fowl was no longer an unostentatious bird to her. It was a dollar. A roast was a dollar and a half. A bunch of asparagus spelt twenty-five cents; and her embittered soul was not even

spared the horror of regarding radishes as ruthlessly swallowed, hard earned pennies. Her master was being eaten into bankruptcy, and she had directed his money into the baleful sluice of these alien and ungrateful gullets.

She was moodily regarding a huge chicken pie one morning, and nursing the delicious hope that some of the bones in it might choke the greedy strangers who were destined to swallow it, when one of these, the artist, entered the kitchen. This was forbidden territory, but he was within the gates and gave her no chance to utter a gulp of protest.

"By Jove, Katie, you've got it again!" he cried. "Keep it a minute; hold it! Oh, confound it, you've let it get away!"

Katie gazed at him, stupefied.

"Is it the chicken pie yez mean?" she asked, with deliberate cynicism. "Sure, I've got it yet—but not for long," she added bitterly, her countenance emphasizing her words.

"*That's it! That's it! Now hold it!*"

The artist was sketching for dear life, his nervous pencil darting over the page of his notebook like a swallow, while his eyes kept turning from it to her. After a little he punctuated his work with comments.

"You know, I'm going to paint you, Katie," he exclaimed gaily. "Got my idea at last! You're to pose for me out in the barn. Professor Trent says you may. I've just been talking to him. Came to see you about it, and here you were, with just the right expression. Noticed it before. That's what caught my eye in the first place. Gave me the idea. That's all right."

He closed the book and turned to her with a radiant smile.

"Now come out to the barn to be immortalized."

Before Katie knew quite what was happening, she found herself standing in front of his easel, where he had placed her, her hand above her eyes, and a very excited young man making a sketch of her on a large, virgin canvas.

"It doesn't matter how you look now," said the youth presently. "You can drop your hand, too. I just wanted

to get the pose and block in the figure. You're really a bully subject, you know. But when we get to the face I want you to have exactly the right look."

The words died away in satisfied murmurs. Katie, dazedly regarding the distant hills, on which he had told her to fix her eyes, marveled at the change in him. The floor was littered with things he had begun and torn up; but every stroke of the work he was doing now spoke of absolute certainty.

"Well, ye'll have to excuse me," she said at last. "I'll be goin' now an' gettin' yer dinner."

"Dinner!" The young man glared at her as he shouted the words. "Who wants dinner? Keep still!" he ordered, and worked on.

"But the others'll be wantin' theirs—"

"They'll never think of it. And let 'em want. They're not artists! Shut up, Katie; your talk bothers me."

Katie shut up. The long afternoon wore away. Several times she mentioned that she was tired, but he did not seem to hear her. Occasionally a chicken wandered through the open door of the barn, clucked with a maidenly, ingenuous air, looked about, and, finding itself neglected, strolled indifferently out again. In the rafters above the inspired artist and his weary model the pigeons cooed incessantly. The sun had gone down before the painter dropped his brush, threw back his head and gloated over his work.

"It's *good*," he said; "and it's going to be better. *Now*, Katie," he added, suddenly remembering her, "I'll help you to get supper."

He threw his arm around her as he spoke and waltzed her out of the barn; and the next instant the scandalized hens scattered in every direction, to let Katie Ryan pass them in the one quasi-Bacchic moment of a dull and blameless life.

It was an evening late in the following December when Katie Ryan, comfortably seated by the stove in her immaculate kitchen, told the end of the story to her venerable crony, Mary Rooney, who had come to investigate the truth of

strange rumors of wealth, fame and princely gifts that were floating about the little village. To the fact of the gifts she was already prepared to testify. She had held in her hands the dress that had come for Katie, and she had felt between her worn fingers the rich, heavy quality of the silk. She had been graciously permitted to try on the jet-trimmed bonnet, and had looked enviously at the handsome umbrella and suede gloves. Katie regarded them all with a complacent, proprietary smile.

"Yes, 'tis a grand Christmas we've been havin'," she resumed. "'Tis jumpin' with excitement I've bin ivir since our stock come Thursday mornin', be express. Tin thousand dollars fer the Perfesser, an' wan thousand fer meself, from thim invinters that didn't have so much as a clane collar whin they come here to think last June, an' thim rollin' in millions now, all because av some little thing they done to make the cars cost the railroad companies less. The way they got their meals the last month they was here, wid me posin' fer me pitcher in the barn ivery day, was scand'lous. Whin that young man got tired—well, *thin* they could ate. An' whin that young man wanted to worruk, go hungry it was or go to the divil. An' the Perfesser as bad as anny—sittin' in the barn all day, watchin' the young man make the pitcher an' hearin' him talk about Paree an' thim other for'n places. But 't'was a grand pitcher he made. Av all the things he sint me, I like this best."

An expression of frank, intense pride settled on her features. Opening a large envelope, which she had been holding in her hand, she drew from it a halftone newspaper reproduction of a painting.

"Let me look at it again," begged her friend. "Shure, 'tis fine," she added humbly, after they had studied it together.

It *was* fine. It had lost much in the black and white reproduction, but much was left. It bore the simple caption "Alone," and it showed an old woman standing at the door of her empty cottage on the Irish coast. Her hand

shaded her eyes, but her lonely heart looked out of them as they gazed over the sweep of the limitless sea that stretched between her and her distant children. A few lines under the picture explained that it had won the first prize at the autumn exhibition in New York, and had subsequently been sold for five thousand dollars to a wealthy patron of American art, who also gained the prestige of having discovered a rising genius.

The two women gazed at it long and earnestly. At last Mrs. Rooney drew a long breath.

"'Tis like ye, yet 'tis not like ye," she remarked firmly. "'Tain't like ye to look so des'prit."

"But 'tis in me, just the same," protested her friend. "The Perfesser says so. 'Katie,' he says, 'me poor Katie, it couldn't all be there,' he says, 'if some wasn't in ye,' he says. 'Little did we know,' he says, 'the loneliness av yer poor empty heart.'"

Katie paused, with a smile that strove to be in keeping with the sad condition of that organ.

"Just the same," she added confidentially, "whin that young man wanted what he called the exprission, all I had to do was to think av thim three min atin' us out av house an' home. An' the bills! The exprission come thin, fast enough, an' he was day-lighted that I could put it on so well, the gassoon!"

For a moment they sat silent. Then Katie continued her reflections.

"They come to *think*," she said slowly; "an' they *thought*! An' look phwat they got for ut! Millions an' thousands! An' me thinkin' all me life," she added bitterly, "an' phwat do I get? Na-thin'!"

She brooded on this wrong till a calming memory returned to her. Her gaze fell contentedly on the picture in her hand.

"Av course, 't'was thinkin' got me *this*," she added conscientiously. "'T'was me thinkin' that give him his idee. So I guess they's somethin' in thinkin', after all, whin me thinkin' day an' night about Kelley's meat bills starts a young man paintin' like mad an' earns him five thousand dollars!"

# "WILD HONEY"

By Edward Salisbury Field

THE immediate and immense success of her first book, "Passionate Hearts," meant as much to Rennett and McPherson as to Miss Lorian, for, till its appearance, her publishers had received little encouragement from "the trade;" but now, with "Passionate Hearts" in its two hundred thousandth and still selling, the firm of Rennett and McPherson was able to dream pleasant dreams, buy new office furniture and pay certain till now embarrassing printers' bills. So it may be said that Miss Lorian and her publishers skyrocketed from obscurity together. And it had been provided that they should remain together; for the moment "Passionate Hearts" began to sell beyond expectation (and the Rennett and McPherson expectation never climbed higher than ten thousand copies in these days) Miss Lorian was given a contract to sign, and had signed it gladly, with this result: Rennett and McPherson were to have the refusal of everything she might write for the next five years.

Until these conditions became known, nothing pleased this enterprising firm more than the frantic efforts of certain distinguished publishers to get their prize author away from them. As for Miss Lorian, Miss Elvira Lorian, she was, naturally, the apple of the Rennett and McPherson eye, the foundation on which they builded many a castle in the air; they were impatient for another book from her pen; there was nothing like following up a success with an even greater success.

"Passionate Hearts" had been called improper. The best sort of advertising! A book denounced is a book to read. Librarians barred it from their shelves,

with the result it was the one book their patrons demanded. So the Rennett and McPherson interest and expectation was centered in Miss Lorian's next book.

The tragedy of it all was that, after completing the first six chapters of this next book, which her publishers were already advertising to appear in the early fall, Miss Lorian stopped work. Of course there were explanations; she was worked out, she said—had gone stale. Again, she complained of feeling like a spirited race horse that had been trained too fine. Sad, indeed, when in the Publishers' Sweepstakes she was carrying what is known in racing circles as a "bunch" of Rennett and McPherson money.

Miss Lorian wrote entirely on temperament; that is to say, she never knew more than vaguely when she began a novel what it was to be about; her one effort was to establish her characters; after that her manuscript was a sort of Liberty Hall wherein each character, following his individual bent, worked out his own salvation—or damnation. Also Miss Lorian was possessed of a burning if virginal imagination; all that she wanted to live, and couldn't, she wrote. Small wonder, then, that the result made her ever increasing audience sit up. And her new book was destined, or so her publishers imagined, to make a goodly number of people, such as presidents of women's clubs and lady librarians, not only sit up but actually stand up and tear their hair. This thought was eminently pleasing to Messrs. Rennett and McPherson; hair tearing in the audience would add tremendously to sales. Certainly this next book of hers, "Wild Honey," should sell—well, to be

conservative, five hundred thousand copies.

And then Miss Lorian had drifted into the literary doldrums, and it was now her publishers who tore their hair. That is, McPherson did. Mr. Rennett was more optimistic.

"I'll not say die until I'm dead," he declared.

"And you couldn't say it then," McPherson retorted.

Nevertheless, he listened with some respect when Mr. Rennett unfolded a plan which was bound, he said, to inspire Miss Lorian to renew her literary labors. McPherson knew so little of women that he imagined Rennett must know much concerning them. Perhaps Rennett did.

Mr. Harold Ware, a neat package containing the manuscript of his book of poems under his arm, walked briskly down Fifth Avenue till he reached Seventeenth Street, where he turned west. It was a red letter day for Mr. Ware, for had not a publisher sent for him—yes, actually sent for him? He wondered if he owed it to that poem of his in *The Ladies' Mirror* for April.

A postman carrying a well filled leather bag now came into view, whereupon Mr. Ware paused, to regard him thoughtfully. Poor man! He didn't—he couldn't realize what he was carrying. Why, there was an epic in that bag; side by side lay letters of love, of hate, of hope, of misery, of greed—letters of sorrow, of anguish, of despair! And the postman was smiling. How horrible!

Mr. Ware shuddered, made a mental note of the postman's bag as a subject for his next effusion, then dismissing it altogether from his mind, hurried on to keep his appointment with Mr. Rennett.

Mr. Rennett, though outwardly at ease, was inwardly embarrassed; he greeted Mr. Ware with effusion tempered with distrust. Mr. Ware returned the greeting with a confidence born of the manuscript under his arm and of a feeling that his hour of triumph had at last arrived.

"You sent for me about my book?" he asked.

"Ye-es," assented Mr. Rennett, "about your book—and other things. As a matter of fact, Mr. Ware, we want you to do a little work for us; we are thinking of—that is, we require a series of verses, say two or three a week. And, in return for them, we shall be glad to publish your poems. I see you have them with you."

"Yes, I have brought my soul child with me."

"Well, here's your chance to give that child of yours a nice print dress, bound in green buckram, gold letters on the cover, twenty-five copies for yourself. What do you say? You do us three verses a week, and we'll get out your book in style. See, I've the contracts all ready to sign."

"You'll pay me for the verses, too, I presume."

"Pay you? Aren't we paying you by publishing your book?"

"Ah," said Mr. Ware sadly, "it is just as I thought; you are offering me a bribe! I'm sorry, Mr. Rennett, but I wish my verses to stand or fall on their own merits."

"But we think your book splendid!" declared Mr. Rennett. "Why, only this morning Mr. McPherson said to me, 'Rennett,' said he, 'that young Ware is a coming man; I shall be proud to have his name on our fall list.'"

"Very kind of Mr. McPherson, I'm sure."

"Not at all. As a firm, I flatter myself we appreciate genius and give honor where honor is due. But there's no denying, Mr. Ware, that books of poetry do not sell; by publishing your book, we'd face the dead certainty of a loss. Besides, what are a few verses a week to a man of your talent? You give us the verses, and we'll publish your book. Is it a go?"

"If you'll explain the nature of the verses you require."

"The easiest kind in the world to write—love verses."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Ware. "You want love verses?"

"And why not?" demanded Mr. Rennett.

"You ask me for three tender, lilting



love lyrics a week? Impossible! Why, even a Keats couldn't do it!"

"My boy," said Mr. Rennett gravely, "in many respects I think you've got Keats lashed to the mast. I *know* you can do it. They're to be written to a lady, you understand."

"Ah, to a lady! Of what type?"

"Well, you see, she isn't exactly what you'd call beautiful; she's a bit oldish, too. I tell you this so you won't go in too strong for 'cheeks like roses,' and 'lips like cherries,' and all that sort of thing."

"Perhaps she has a beautiful soul," suggested Mr. Ware.

"Now you're talking! My boy, she's got a be-u-tiful soul!"

"Full of longings and of sighs—of noble aspirations, of regrets; of dead autumn leaves, of wintry blasts and of little flowering hopes."

"That's it!" almost shouted Mr. Rennett. "That's it in a nutshell! And she has really corking eyes."

"Their color?"

"I'm not quite sure. I'll find out, and wire you."

"Do you know," said Mr. Ware, "I begin to grow interested. Lines to an unknown woman with a beautiful soul—the subject fascinates me. Why, the lines should lilt themselves. I'll do my best for you, Mr. Rennett, I will, indeed."

"Bully for you!" said Mr. Rennett. "And now, while we're about it, we may as well sign these contracts."

Mr. Ware gone, Mr. Rennett hastened into an adjoining room to recount his success to his partner.

"I've got him," he said, "got him for three verses a week. And if we don't have Elvira Lorian grinding out chapters for us before many days—well, I'm no judge of women."

It is written that the gods shall weave many a pattern of destiny from threads furnished by the foolish actions of men.

In his shabby studio on east Thirty-ninth Street, Mr. Harold Ware sat in lonely vigil with his soul; it was his favorite occupation always, and particularly pleasing tonight, for only that

morning something new and strange and sad had come into his life. How wonderful it was to feel deeply once more! For weeks his heart had been empty, his affections idle—ever since Zaidee Crandall had engaged herself to that stockbroker person, in fact. He had fancied Zaidee understood and appreciated him, had thought of her tenderly as pure gold. And she had proved mere dross. But the worst of all was to discover he did not care.

Like many poets, Mr. Ware could not feel quite normal without sorrow; so he reached out for each new sorrow as a child reaches for the moon. And that morning he had run plump into a perfect moon of sorrow. All of which, translated, means that Mr. Ware had fallen blindly, madly and devotedly in love with the unknown woman of the beautiful soul. And he must burn incense before her, the sweet incense of love breathing words.

Securing pen and paper, Mr. Ware sat down before his desk, only to be interrupted by a knock at the door. On opening the door, he was handed a telegram which read:

She has blue eyes.

RENNETT.

This message proved to be somewhat in the nature of an anticlimax, for already Mr. Ware had settled it in his mind that the unknown woman with the beautiful soul must have brown eyes. Still, it made but little difference; he was sure, positively sure, he couldn't be mistaken in the color of her soul; it was the color of a dove's breast, a tender, warm gray. And it was her soul he loved.

Yet, after all, love was but a transient thing. Witness his passion for Zaidee Crandall; one word of indifference from her, and his love had been snuffed out like a candle, had fallen from his heart as the petals from a rose. Yes, that was it; love was like a rose—a rose that bloomed for a day, then died. Having decided this important question, Mr. Ware now proceeded to train the rose of love over a lattice of words; he worked in fine frenzy, sheet after sheet of paper fluttering to the floor.

Often he would pause to clutch wildly at his sable locks, his method of pursuing what he was pleased to call "the inevitable phrase." And this evening, inevitable phrases proving most difficult of capture, it was not till long past midnight that Mr. Ware laid down his pen.

The last word written, he proceeded to read the poem aloud in a satisfied, booming voice:

"Ah, love is a transient thing,  
A rose in a wreath of sighs;  
It lasts such a little while—  
In a night and a day it dies.

"We cherish it in our hearts,  
We water it with our tears;  
But love is a transient thing—  
A rose in a wreath of years.

"Alas, for the weary heart!  
Alas, for the wistful eyes!  
Love is a transient thing—  
In a night and a day it dies."

Not content with a single reading of these lines, Mr. Ware read them again and yet again, till, overcome by their colossal sadness, he almost burst into tears.

This period of depression proved but brief, however; it was followed by elation, and elation was followed by—hunger. Putting on his hat, Mr. Ware repaired to a little all-night restaurant round the corner and ordered a Hamburger steak and a cup of coffee.

When Mr. Ware drifted into Mr. Rennett's private office next afternoon, he received the most cordial greeting he had ever received from a publisher—the only cordial greeting, to be exact.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Rennett, "I'm glad to see you. Has the divine afflatus been afflating properly?"

"I have succeeded in writing some love verses," Mr. Ware replied with dignity.

"That's good. Let's have a look at them."

"Not so bad, not so bad," Mr. Rennett murmured, after reading the verses. "I see roses are indicated. You might use violets next time. But I don't wish to dictate; any flower that's in season will do. Only please don't use orchids, they're so dashed expensive! I suppose you didn't get my wire in time for it

to be of any use, but don't forget it. Feature those blue eyes. Play 'em up strong. And don't be afraid of putting it on thick. What we want is heart throbs."

"I can only write what I feel, Mr. Rennett."

"Yes, I know. But that's where you poets put one over on us laymen: you can feel any old thing you like. It's because you have imagination."

"Ah," said Mr. Ware, "imagination—the poet's blessing and the poet's curse!"

"Exactly," agreed Mr. Rennett. "Before you go, I wish you'd sit down and write out those verses of yours, in long-hand, on this blue notepaper."

Mr. Ware having taken his departure, with the promise of a speedy return and more love verses, Mr. Rennett slipped the poet's neatly written lines into a blue envelope, which he sealed carefully and placed in his pocket. He then set out for a neighboring florist's, where he ordered two dozen American Beauty roses packed in a box suitable for sending by express. When Mr. Rennett left the florist's, this box, containing the blue envelope which held Mr. Ware's love verses, had been addressed to Miss Elvira Lorian, Woodford, Connecticut.

This, then, was Mr. Rennett's inspired plan for rescuing his firm's prize author from the slough of indifference into which she had so apparently fallen; with a rope of anonymous love verse and roses, he felt he might be able to effect a partial rescue; and then, with more love verses and more roses—or violets, or whatever flower seemed best—he would surely succeed in hauling her to the firm land of womanly interest and curiosity. Yes, that was the thing—to arouse her curiosity. Once aroused, that ruling passion of her sex would cause her to feel deeply; and, with women, to feel deeply is to live. Further, in Miss Lorian's case, to live was, obviously, to write.

It was all very plain to Mr. Rennett. A series of anonymous love verses, accompanied by flowers, could not fail to set Miss Lorian's mind to buzzing; her thoughts would fly like bees to the

clover fields of fiction, and the result would be "Wild Honey" ready for the market in the fall.

The immense success of her first book, "Passionate Hearts," had done much for Miss Lorian. In the first place, it had freed her from a position of semi-slavery in the household of Mrs. Archimedes Poynter of Boston, granddaughter of a famous abolitionist; for it was while acting as governess to the Misses Beulah and Leonora Poynter, aged eight and twelve respectively, that the book had been written. Indeed, after reading "Passionate Hearts," Mrs. Poynter felt that her two lambs had been delivered most miraculously from the influence of an undesirable, and—yes, immoral—woman. Her first question on engaging a successor to Miss Lorian had been: "Do you write novels?"

Now to call Miss Lorian immoral was enough to make even the famous Cheshire cat, that had never been known to indulge beyond a grin, burst into a hearty guffaw. But one must not judge Mrs. Poynter too harshly, especially since the Mrs. Poynters of Boston—and elsewhere—add greatly to the world's stability. If we all possessed a keen sense of humor, we would do naught but laugh at our neighbors, and at ourselves; all work would cease, and the world would become nerve-racked and perpetually hysterical.

To be even fairer to Mrs. Poynter, Miss Lorian was as sadly lacking in humor as herself, else she could never have written "Passionate Hearts." But the good Lord knows, a spinster, half-way through the thirties, leading the starved life of governess to self-satisfied daughters of a pompous mother, sees little enough to smile at. And if she write a book, why shouldn't she write of life as she would like to it be, of love as she imagines it?

The sophisticated might, and did, smile at her dashing young hero who loved madly, at his flowery, flowing speeches, at his naïve egoism, at his unsuspected *gaucheries*; and the prudish were shocked by the red, red language of his love. Even so, the shop girls adored "Passionate Hearts," and many another

spinster besides Miss Lorian felt that in the hero of this tale her ideal of manly beauty, speech, grace and tenderness was realized.

So it is but just to look upon "Passionate Hearts" and Miss Lorian with a kindly eye, laying any fault to be found at the door of her publishers, Messrs. Rennett and McPherson; for Miss Lorian had but written of life and love as she dreamed it. And when, in its first review, certain critics had called her book immodest and improper, Miss Lorian had been for the moment the most surprised, shocked and deeply hurt woman in the whole world.

Having bombarded her with flowers and love verses from the facile pen of Mr. Ware for two whole weeks, Mr. Rennett now felt he could wait no longer to learn if his efforts toward restoring Miss Lorian's appetite for work had proved successful. Was she writing, or was she not? He determined to find out for himself, to go to Woodford that very afternoon.

Mr. McPherson, on being consulted, heartily approved this decision. Said he: "Already our florist bill amounts to thirty-seven dollars, and a wicked thing it would be to continue buying posies if Miss Lorian is doing nothing to help pay for them. Go and see her by all means."

So it came to pass that Mr. Rennett sent a wire stating his intention of calling that afternoon at four, and begging for an answer if the hour or day he had set proved inconvenient. Receiving no reply, he caught the train which leaves the Grand Central Station a few minutes before two.

When success first made contemplation of her bankbook a pleasure to Miss Lorian, she moved to New York, where she felt, as the author of "Passionate Hearts," she would meet with some social recognition and form pleasant acquaintance with members of her craft; and she might have done so if her publishers had been less obscure. But at this time Messrs. Rennett and McPherson were decidedly out of the circle of things literary; the books they published were written by unknown

authors from the Middle West; in the publishing world they were regarded as nobodies; so, after two lonely months in New York, Miss Lorian turned to the country for solace, finding it in Woodford, where she purchased a cottage set in a tangled garden.

It had been her exquisite pleasure to untangle the garden, to weed and hoe, to train roses over trellises, to plant seeds and bulbs—to watch the miracle of fragrant flowers blooming where flowers had never bloomed before, or, if so, in dim, forgotten days. And as the flowers bloomed, so did Miss Lorian bloom; her shoulders lost their droop; often a faint flush appeared in her cheeks; she felt no longer a bit of driftwood on life's pitiless ocean. At last she possessed that which was beautiful in her eyes, doubly beautiful in that it was all her own—particularly beautiful now, for it was April—almost May; the apple trees were *en fête*, the garden sweet with the delicious fragrance of their blossoms; it was an afternoon for dreams. But instead of dreaming she must serve tea to that tiresome Mr. Rennett.

Heretofore, all business dealings with Miss Lorian having been accomplished by letter, or during her occasional brief sojourns in New York, it had never been considered necessary for either member of the firm of Rennett and McPherson to make the journey to Woodford. Mr. Rennett was agreeably surprised by the comfort and charm of Miss Lorian's surroundings.

"By George," he said as he accepted his second cup of tea, "this is delightful! So jolly to have tea out of doors—and under an apple tree, too! I must say you're looking well, Miss Lorian; work and country air seem to agree with you. That's one reason I ran down here, to see how 'Wild Honey' is getting along. Have you any idea when it will be ready for us?"

"Not the slightest idea."

"Surely you are working."

"No," Miss Lorian confessed, "I'm not. Indeed, I feel less like work than I ever did before in my life."

"But think what it means to you to

have your book published in the fall!"

"It means very little to me just now, I'm afraid."

"Then think what it means to us. Thousands of dollars, Miss Lorian!"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Rennett."

"But I had thought—that is, I had been led to believe you would be working overtime. Why, the world is fairly screaming for your next book! You can't—you mustn't disappoint the world!"

"No doubt I shall work by and by," Miss Lorian replied carelessly. "Would you like to look at the rest of my garden?"

"No," said Mr. Rennett, "I wouldn't. Really, Miss Lorian, you are doing yourself a grave injustice. Upon my word," he continued artfully, "you act—yes, you positively act as if you were in love."

At this unexpected remark, the color flew to Miss Lorian's cheeks. "I—I—how absurd of you!" she said.

"Just the same, that's how you act," declared Mr. Rennett. "And I wouldn't blame you, either," he added after an awkward pause. "Only I can't see why it should stop your working. Why, if I'd thought for one minute—Hang it all, I'm disappointed in you, Miss Lorian!"

"I'm very sorry," said Miss Lorian. "Are you sure you are not staying so long that you will miss your train?"

Mr. Rennett, on his way back to New York, did what he would have described as "some tall thinking." Miss Lorian, as independent as you please, had all but turned him out of her garden; his plan had gone sadly awry. Of what earthly use was it to understand women when the tactless creatures didn't live up to a chap's knowledge of them? Still, Miss Lorian's case was most unusual; she was, in her way, a contradiction to her sex. Nine women out of ten, ninety-nine out of a hundred—Mr. Rennett would go so far as to say that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand women, if placed in a similar position, would have acted just as he had planned Miss Lorian should act.

There is an old saying which reads: "He who flatters himself he understands women—flatters himself."

Yet Mr. Rennett had not been altogether wrong in judging what effect Mr. Harold Ware's love verses would have on Miss Lorian, for they did arouse her interest and curiosity—oh, tremendously! The trouble was they had done far more; Miss Lorian's heart had gone out to the writer of the love verses, so far out that it was now beyond her keeping. At first, naturally, she thought there might be some mistake; but when the verses and flowers continued to arrive, each verse more ardent than the last, she could no longer pretend they were not meant for her. And what woman, sensitive, lonely and avid of love, would have failed to be stirred by such an impetuous wooing?

Small wonder Miss Lorian dreamed. Was she not living her first romance? It was April, too, and the world was full of whisperings and of vague longings. So she dreamed and waited for her poet as sweetly and innocently as a young girl waits for her Prince Charming; and what wild honey she gathered, she cherished in her heart.

Mr. Rennett decided it would not be wise to inform his partner that his plan for setting Miss Lorian to work had failed; besides, it hadn't failed entirely—there was yet time to turn defeat into victory. So he entertained Mr. McPherson with a sketchy and not strictly truthful account of his interview with Miss Lorian.

"But is she working?" asked McPherson.

"Oh, yes!" replied Mr. Rennett. "She complains she can accomplish very little, but to have started her working at all is something, and I've no doubt she'll do better from day to day. For one thing, I've decided to stop sending her flowers for a while; I think perhaps they proved a trifle distracting."

This, then, was Mr. Rennett's dark design; he would withhold from Miss Lorian the verses Mr. Ware delivered to him three times a week; he would send her no more boxes of expensive flowers. As jailers sometimes starve

rebellious prisoners into submission, so he would starve Miss Lorian—starve her heart till it turned in its hunger to that solace of all starved hearts, work.

After following this new plan for two weeks, Mr. Rennett decided on another hasty trip to Woodford. He found Miss Lorian looking tired and worn; she had done no work on "Wild Honey." Work was impossible to her now, she said; she had given up all idea of it; indeed, she felt far from well, and thought she would go away for a while, to Vermont perhaps or possibly to England. She had never been to England.

Mr. Rennett was dismayed; something must be done to keep Miss Lorian in Woodford; if she once went to England—or Vermont—heaven only knew when she would finish "Wild Honey." How would it do to bring her and young Ware together? By Jove, the very thing!

"I am sorry to hear you are thinking of leaving Woodford," said Mr. Rennett, adopting his most gracious and disinterested manner, "and I know some one who will be even sorrier; as a matter of truth, my coming to Woodford today had far more to do with sentiment than with business. You see, Miss Lorian, you have an unknown but ardent admirer in a young friend of mine, Mr. Harold Ware. Possibly you have never heard of him, but aside from our holding him in great esteem, both Mr. McPherson and myself have such profound belief in his talent and in his future that we are publishing a book of his poems in the fall. Curiously enough, it was your book, 'Passionate Hearts,' that brought us together; after reading it a month ago, Mr. Ware conceived such an admiration for its author that he came to us to ask for your address. It was in this way we became interested in his poems. So we have to thank you for putting us in the way of securing Mr. Ware's book of poems, as well as for many other things. You can imagine how impatient a poet can be, Miss Lorian. Well, Mr. Ware is all impatience to meet you, and I have ventured to tell him I thought it might be arranged. I wonder if you would be so

good as to let him call some afternoon this week—say Thursday? Is it asking too much?"

To Mr. Rennett's request Miss Lorian made gracious if tremulous reply; she would be most happy to receive Mr. Ware on Thursday afternoon; any friend of Mr. Rennett's could in fact, always count on a welcome from her.

That evening Mr. Rennett called at Mr. Ware's studio, and had the good fortune to find him in. Mr. Ware was both surprised and childishly pleased at this unexpected honor; when publishers knocked at one's door, surely fame could not be far off.

Said Mr. Rennett: "Nice little place you have here. I've been meaning to drop in on you some evening, but never got around to it before. Hope I don't intrude."

"My muse did fly out of the window when you came in at the door," Mr. Ware confessed, "but I fancy I can tempt her back later. May I offer you a cigarette?"

Accepting the cigarette, Mr. Rennett proceeded to lead the conversation by a circuitous path to the highroad of his intention. "By the way," he said, "I want to compliment you on the poems you've been writing for us lately. They're immense! And they're getting better and better."

"Yes, I know," said Mr. Ware; "it's because each day I feel more deeply, because each day the source of my inspiration becomes more beautiful to me."

"Ah, the woman with the beautiful soul!"

"Yes, the woman with the beautiful soul."

"What would you say if I were to tell you I saw her today?"

"I should say," replied Mr. Ware, "that you are, of all men, the most to be envied."

"A purple iris in the wood  
Doth mark where my Beloved stood;  
Behold, in yonder hawthorn spray,  
Her resting place of yesterday,  
And in the grass the patterns made  
By daisies where her feet have strayed.

"Part of my last poem to her, Mr. Rennett. I was working on it when you came in."

"Be-u-tiful!" declared Mr. Rennett. "Positively enchanting! I can't imagine how you do it."

"A poet's heart is the home of haunting melodies."

"To be sure it is. By the way, Ware, how would you like to meet the woman with the beautiful soul?"

"Ah," exclaimed Mr. Ware, "to meet her, to look into her eyes, to sit beside her in the twilight, to hear the sweet, soft rustle of her gown! You ask me if I would like to meet her? As well ask the stars why they blossom in the heavens. Like to meet her? Man, I should die of joy!"

"Then," said Mr. Rennett, "you may consider it settled. This is Tuesday; you are to have tea with her next Thursday afternoon. Call at my office at one o'clock Thursday, and I'll take you to her."

Wednesday was spent by Mr. Ware in hasty journeyings between despair and ecstasy; but when Thursday flung its golden banner in the sky, he awoke to find despair sitting on the footboard of his bed. Alas, the day could hold no joy for him! Truly a poet's soul was the graveyard of his dreams. It was a very pale and disconsolate-looking Mr. Ware that entered Mr. Rennett's private office at one o'clock that afternoon.

"Hello, old man!" was Mr. Rennett's cheerful greeting. "I say, what's got into you? You look like a funeral!"

Mr. Ware sighed. "I feel like a funeral," he said. "I can't go with you this afternoon, Mr. Rennett—I can't go!"

"Can't go? Nonsense! You've got to go! Come, I've a taxicab waiting."

"I can't go," Mr. Ware repeated dismally. "I can't go."

"Never mind. Come with me in the taxi; you can explain on the way uptown."

"Now," said Mr. Rennett, as the taxicab started toward Fifth Avenue, "tell me what's the matter."

Again Mr. Ware sighed. "I doubt if you will understand," he said; "I'm



not sure I understand it myself. Did you ever hear of the abomination of desolation, Mr. Rennett? Well, that is what I am experiencing today; I stand alone and forlorn, an exile from the hearthstones of happiness."

"We'll soon mend that," Mr. Rennett declared.

"Ah, but it can't be mended; my birthright is sorrow, bitter bread my heritage."

"But, my dear fellow—"

Again Mr. Ware sighed. "I see you do not understand," he said

"No, I'm hanged if I do! You're talking poetry, Ware; put it into prose and give a chap a chance."

"It is extremely simple. This wondrous woman with a beautiful soul to whom you would lead me—I dare not meet her. No one—nothing—has ever inspired me as she has inspired me. I see golden visions; I feel the very heart-beat of the world; the day is my coverlet, the night my pillow, and all that ever was or is to be weaves in my brain forming the texture of my dreams. Can't you see? This woman inspires me. To meet her face to face might be to lose my inspiration. I dare not risk it."

"That's just it," argued Mr. Bennett; "you don't know her; if you did, you'd realize she could inspire you beyond anything you ever thought possible. Come, Ware, be a man and take a sporting chance."

"I've often wondered if there are not scores of happy people in this world who live their poetry instead of writing it."

"Of course there are—hundreds of 'em."

"To live one's poetry, that is indeed to live! Can it be true the reason for my being is hid in the heart of a woman?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Rennett, "it's as true as gospel; you can take it from me."

"Then," said Mr. Ware, "I'm done with being a slave to ordered phrases and to lilting words; I throw my cap over the windmill—over the windmill and into the lap of the gods. I will go with you, Mr. Rennett. Nothing can stop me now—nothing!"

"Bully for you!" said Mr. Rennett.

The trip to Woodford was made in silence. Mr. Ware, now reverential, now worldly, felt that he was approaching the altar which bore the sacred flame of his heart's desire—and wondered if his tie couldn't be tied more becomingly; he vowed eternal devotion to the woman with the beautiful soul—and regretted he had not been more particular about polishing his shoes that morning. Mr. Rennett also registered a fervent vow; never again would he embark on any venture which carried a poet as passenger. In a world full of aggravation there was nothing so absolutely aggravating as a poet. Lady novelists were bad enough, but poets—never again!

Miss Lorian's cottage lay about five minutes' walk from the station. Mr. Rennett accompanied Mr. Ware to within a hundred yards of it, then said: "That's her house on the right. I sha'n't go any farther, for I have other things to attend to. Here's your return ticket to New York."

"But surely you don't intend I shall proceed alone!" protested Mr. Ware. "She may not be at home; there will be no one to introduce us; I shall feel awkward, constrained, embarrassed."

"Not at all. She's expecting you. *Au revoir*, dear boy, and good luck."

Turning on his heel, Mr. Rennett walked briskly toward the station. But at the first bend of the road he dodged behind a tree, waiting there till he saw Mr. Ware enter Miss Lorian's gate. Then, breathing a great sigh of relief, he continued on his way to the station.

A knock, and the front door was opened by a maid of all work.

"If you want to see Miss Lorian," she said, "she's in the garden. If you're Mr. Ware, she's expecting you."

"Thank you," said Mr. Ware. "Do I go to the right or to the left?"

"To the left."

Following a path bordered by hyacinths, Mr. Ware came to a stretch of lawn; across the lawn he saw a woman sitting in a wicker chair under an apple tree. This must be Miss Lorian, his Miss Lorian—the woman with the beautiful soul. She wore a simple gown

of white, and a charming garden hat trimmed with corn flowers; she rose from her chair as Mr. Ware approached, and stood waiting to greet him.

As he drew near, Mr. Ware was confronted by the embarrassment he had dreaded; it seemed to surround him like a high wall.

"Good afternoon," he said, removing his gray felt hat and fumbling it in his hands—"er—good afternoon."

"Good afternoon," said Miss Lorian. "Won't you sit down?"

"Thank you. It's—it's warm today."

"Yes, isn't it? May I offer you a cup of tea?"

"Oh, please!"

While Miss Lorian poured tea with a trembling hand, Mr. Ware took furtive stock of her. She wasn't pretty. Supposing Mr. Rennett had been mistaken in the quality of her soul? What could such a man know of souls, anyway?

In the meantime, Miss Lorian was thinking that Mr. Ware looked absurdly boyish to have written such sad, heart breaking poems. And he had a frightfully large nose!

So they sipped their tea in mutual constraint, eyeing their cups reproachfully. Could this be the journey's end? Was it thus that dreams came true?

"Won't you have more bread and butter, Mr. Ware?"

"No, I thank you, Miss Lorian."

"A little strawberry jam?"

"No, I thank you."

"Another cup of tea?"

"No, I thank you."

"Perhaps your last cup was too strong."

"As a matter of fact, I don't care for tea; I like coffee."

"So do I," agreed Miss Lorian. "I like it infinitely better than tea."

"Two eggs and a cup of coffee—that's my breakfast."

"Do you write in the morning, Mr. Ware?"

"No, I generally work at night."

"How curious! I always write in the morning."

"What," exclaimed Mr. Ware, "do you write?"

"Why, yes! I thought you knew.

Indeed, Mr. Rennett told me you liked my book, 'Passionate Hearts.'"

"'Passionate Hearts,'" said Mr. Ware—"Passionate Hearts"—I don't believe I ever read it."

"How very strange! I wonder what he meant by telling me you had read it?"

"It's hard to say," said Mr. Ware. "A man like Mr. Rennett is a mystery to me. So you really write, do you? I must read your book."

"I've had the pleasure of reading some of your poems; I think them very beautiful."

"I'm glad you like them. What magazines did you see them in?"

"I mean the poems you sent me. Yes, and the roses, the wonderful roses!"

"But I didn't send you any poems—or any roses. It must have been Mr. Rennett who sent them."

"I'm sorry to have made such a stupid mistake," said Miss Lorian in a lifeless voice. "I—I—are you sure you won't have another cup of tea?"

"But I did write the poems, Miss Lorian. And I wrote them for you. You see, I fell in love with your soul."

"With my soul?"

"Yes, with your beautiful soul."

"But I don't understand."

"Why should you understand? Who that is mortal can understand the ways of love? Mr. Rennett described you to me one day, and ever since you have been the dear pivot of my thoughts and dreams. The poems are yours, Miss Lorian; I gave them to Mr. Rennett in the hope that they would reach your hands—and heart. I should have adored sending roses with them. But because he sent them for me, shall we quarrel with fate? Shall we question the inscrutable acts of the gods?"

"Yet I can't see why Mr. Rennett should—"

"Of course you can't. Neither can I. But does it make roses more sweet to explain their fragrance? If the hands of destiny had not led me, should I be here this afternoon?"

"I presume not," said Miss Lorian. "Still—"

"Ah, I know what you were going to say! But you sha'n't say it. You

would prefer that Love should come in a golden chariot, and instead Love comes humbly on foot. True love must ever walk humbly, Miss Lorian. And now that Love has come, do you turn him away?"

Intoxicated by the sound of his own voice, Mr. Ware leaned supplicatingly toward the author of "Passionate Hearts" and looked into her eyes. What he saw there startled him, for it was that which he had never before seen in the eyes of a woman—infinite love, infinite trust, infinite tenderness. For the first time in his career, Mr. Ware felt unworthy. Life offered him more than he had ever dreamed of possessing. What had he to offer in return?

Humbly and with reverence, as one who, giving all, aspires to give more, Mr. Ware gave his heart to Miss Lorian; and as they looked in each other's eyes, reading therein all the sweet wonder and mystery of Love, a vagrant wind stirred the leaves overhead, fragrant petals fluttered to the ground and the little blind god, laying his bow and quiver on the grass, sat at their feet and smiled.

Three days later Mr. Rennett received the following letter:

DEAR MR. RENNETT,

I think I owe it to you to tell you that I shall under no circumstances complete my novel, "Wild Honey," as I find it no longer reflects my ideals. It is my intention to write children's stories in the future. As agreed in our contract, I shall take pleasure in submitting them to you when completed.

It may interest you to learn that Mr. Ware and I were married yesterday.

Sincerely,

ELVIRA LORIAN WARE.

This, then, was the result of all his planning; no "Wild Honey" in the fall, no more novels from the pen of the author of "Passionate Hearts"—nothing but measly children's stories! How would he ever find courage to break the news to McPherson? Where was his boasted knowledge of women?

Suddenly, from the heights of ignorance, Mr. Rennett plunged into the very depths of knowledge. Said he: "I used to think I was wise when it came to women, but I don't know a thing about 'em, not a blamed thing!"



## FAITH

By James William Callahan

LAST night, in yonder heaven clear and bright,  
There shone a star.  
I watched its golden beams of radiant light  
Come from afar.

Tonight dark clouds, blown windward to and fro,  
Hide light so fair,  
And leave me all in darkness—yet I know  
The star is there.

# THE RAMATAPANIYOPANISHAD

By Ellis Parker Butler

**A** LONG about the eleventh century, when literature was getting into bad shape, one of the Hindoo publishers brought out a little gem of thought which he published under the alluring title of "The Ramatapaniyopanishad." Its success was almost immediate, for it was a Upanishad of the Atharvaveda, and you know how things of that sort always take. In less than four hundred years it took its place among the best sellers, where its name stuck out beyond the curb line about four feet, three inches.

In spite of the hoot of certain critics to the effect that the title of this noble work was secured by loading a pot of glue and three bob-tailed alphabets into a gun and firing the whole mess at a blank wall, we can assure the public that it has a meaning. It means "The Eighteen Carat Upanishad About Rama," and what that means can be guessed from the fact that a Upanishad—even a cheap plated one—is an *excursus* into a higher and freer region of thought. When an author begins to work that sort of gag on old Rama, you may be sure there will be something thrilling happening in every chapter.

A work like this loses much of its Oriental charm in being translated into the cold Carnegieized English language, but I cannot refrain from rendering into verse the Eighth Peloponnesus of the Seventy-first Archipelago, which I consider the gem of the whole book. The graceful Oriental imagery is here at its best. I have translated freely, trying to give the spirit rather than the form. This little gem bears a title of its own nearly as appalling as that of the whole work, its meaning being approximately, "Oh, Waiter, What the Dickens Is This?"

It was a dreary eve-en-ning, the waiter  
was quite slow,  
The customer had sitting been a weary  
hour or so,  
He thought his food would never come,  
he thought he'd sat a year,  
So he let his thoughts to mother turn, to  
mother fond and dear;  
But while he so was thinking the waiter  
came that way,  
And when he saw what he had brought,  
the customer did say:

"Oh, waiter what is this you brang?  
What's this you brang to me?  
It ain't the stuff I ordered,  
As you can plainly see.  
I ordered good North River fish,  
And oh, it makes me sad  
To see that you have brang to me  
A planked Upani-shad!"

The waiter then to him did turn, a tear  
was in his eye,  
He looked at that there customer, and  
he to him did sigh;  
"Honest to goodness, sir," he said, "I  
done the best I could;  
We ain't got no North River shad, and  
what we have ain't good;"  
And then unto the customer, who turned  
his head away,  
The waiter did approach more close, and  
thus to him did say:

"If you don't like Upani-shad,  
I'll tell you what to do:  
Just let me bring you something else  
From off this here meen-you;  
Just let me fetch you this here fish—  
I tell you it ain't bad,  
Oh, sir, just try this Ramata—  
Paniyopani-shad."

# SONIA'S HIGH FINANCE

By Anne Partlan and Hector Alliot

A SENTENCE has often made a philosopher—sometimes a great detective.

When the illustrious Vidocq wrote, in answer to inquiries from his pupils, "*Cherchez la femme*," he solved the problem of detective training. Since then Vidocq occupies in the realm of police the most exalted position.

How we managed to wander away from feminine influence on crime and social problems that warm evening I really cannot tell. It is a far cry from such subjects, always full of interesting discussion, to Wall Street quotations. The truth of the matter is that Harold Brown is steeped in Stock Exchange lore, and whether you begin to speak about astronomy or the latest sensation, gradually, if you stay with him long enough, he will draw you to Wall Street and hold everybody's attention to the end of the evening.

Pascal or some other wise philosopher says somewhere that a man must think of his invention or his fad even when he sneezes, to be really great and successful. I imagine that Brown does it, because he has succeeded in amassing what would seem an all-sufficient sum for present and future comfort—nay, luxury. You might think that he could now forget business for some fun according to his taste, and divorce Wall Street. This is what I was attempting to get him to do in telling him detective stories; but not he.

Born under the ticker, fed on the tape, quotations are his food and drink, his passion, his pastime. Clever chap enough, university bred and of no ordinary mentality, the ticking of that infernal machine combined with daily

newspaper reports constitutes the pool of emerald where his soul floats contented.

Even to one like myself, who does not know and cares less, his disease is so catching that before the evening was over I had forgotten my story, the music and the fascinating kaleidoscopic vision of New York society (the queer and strange medley that remains in town in summer because it has to, or to entertain country cousins) at Sherry's one August night.

The charges and counter charges of Pennsylvania Preferred, Lackawanna and Erie, bonds and certificates, came on me furiously, and I confess that I became lost in the maze of discussion of fluctuating values, a beautiful and fascinating subject on the lips of Brown, the Wall Street prophet.

Only one thing do I remember that proved interesting to me—possibly to you as well. "But what is the most remarkable," said Brown, in one of his paroxysms of financial fever, "is that the Imperial Russian bonds have been listed with us for the first time, and that they rose to nearly ninety in a few weeks, created a furor, and like a stone in a pond disappeared as they came, leaving the surface of the market unchanged for their terrible and sudden splash. Now you will certainly agree that this beats anything you may produce in your laboratory or any story of imperial finance or detective prowls your imagination can conjure. Why did these bonds come, like Caesar, to conquer and to disappear? This is a mystery worthy of two Vidocqs, if I know anything about Wall Street, its life and its methods."

I nodded, overcome by such eloquent

discussion of occult matters. We drank a last toast to the Russian Imperial bonds and parted as good friends as before, each with the mental reservation that the other was as crazy as ever, and the time went on merrily.

Let us shift the scene. A scientific mission took me by chance, and that quite unexpectedly, to Paris last winter.

I was educated there and there I met some delightful friends, who have ever remained dear these thirty years. My chum at college was a Russian prince, and through him, after the Russo-Turkish war, I was able to meet in a particularly intimate fashion the Beau Brummel of the Russian army, Skobeleff, the Muscovite Sherman, Gourko, and acquire a free access to that little Parisian Russian world which is as fascinating as it is exotic in that social mosaic which is Paris.

Russian men are captivating but their women are a species by themselves. Man's caliber is not very hard to gauge; his motives are almost always simple, his emotions also. With the Russian woman, the wisest one would lose his science. She is the most extraordinary combination of what we of the Occident know as woman, with a dozen other phases which represent her slow and Oriental inheritance of blood, barbaric and yet cultured, intense and often cold and calculating.

The little Russian world revolves around the *salon* of Baroness Ianowska, where diplomats, artists, financiers and many of the impoverished aristocrats meet on Wednesday night. It is often called the Babel of Paris, because you can converse in any tongue and find somebody to talk to in this fascinating gathering of clever people from the Indus to the Tagus, from the Neva to the Tiber. Women are curious, they tell us; it is their sin, and gossip their pastime. Believe not those who would thus try to lead you astray. The real gossip is the clubman, the inveterate seeker of scandal a man, always a man who starts the ball rolling.

The inner circle of the Ianowska is no exception to that universal rule. Professor Wysocki, once chamberlain to a Rus-

sian prince, is now teaching the art of the violin, the favorite pastime of his youth. Now his only means of livelihood is the quintessence of the gossip, the bureau of information for everything that transpires, good or bad, specially bad in the Russian colony of Paris. Tall, retaining the bearing of an officer of the guards, the stately white-haired gentleman invites confidences—and he retails them. Thus this old aristocrat, once wealthy and of social importance, keeps his hold on the edge of society owing to his illustrious descent and his white hairs. If you want to know anything about the Ianowska group, meet the old Professor, deferentially invite him to lunch with you as a favor, and the rest is yours. By the time you reach the *café noir* you will have known all that you are seeking and a great deal more.

As we sat at Marguery's discussing his famous menu and his precious *sauterne*, I learned of all the scandals that had been hatched since my last visit. I could tell you the story of old General Felinoff and that of Captain Meruphin as they really are, and not as they appeared in print, and half a dozen very spicy tales indeed.

But that which interests us most here is the sequence, or I might better say the genesis, of my friend Brown's Imperial bonds, which came to me in our talk that day in the most unexpected manner.

Claude, another celebrated master detective, tells us in his memoirs that even the amateur can turn out a pretty good sleuth if he will listen and make deductions carefully, as truth travels from the center to the periphery of the circle. It surely came that way on that eventful early afternoon.

"What became of Count Medrikoff?" said I to the Professor, curious to learn what had become of this young Slav giant, who had come to Paris three years before, with a million rubles and the bland, innocent smile of the cultured barbarian of eastern Russia.

"What became of him?" replied the old Professor. "What becomes of all moths when they come and gaze into the electric fire that the gay, the frivolous, the foreign Paris is? They get their



wings singed, and they often are vaporized into nothingness from the very breath of the furnace."

"I imagined as much," said I, "when I saw him buy the bank at the 'Mirlictions' and attempt to show the old guard how baccarat should be played. With an opening of ten thousand rubles for the evening, his granddaddy's inheritance could not last long, I know; and I have wondered often what became of my Muscovite Hermes, because I liked him. I admire and feel sorry for him, as one does for the beautifully fleeced lamb that is led to the shambles. But if it were not for such lambs, which are shorn regularly each year, a certain phase of youthful folly full of life and of tragedy would never be enacted, and for the psychologist Paris would in time become the dreariest hunting ground for study and sensations."

"Count Medrikoff, sir, is a respected, peaceful agriculturist in Seine-et-Oise. He raises beets and is a director in the sugar refinery," said in a prophetic tone the Professor, as one reads the commercial report of a credit agency. "A very superior man of high standing, and liberal without nonsense, who has forgotten baccarat for more sensible and worthwhile pursuits."

"Change of front and of tone," said I to myself. "Medrikoff has surely become the Mæcenas of the violin and of Wysocki, its high priest."

"And Sonia Alexandrovna," I inquired meekly—"how did their affair terminate—as I assume it must have, because Sonia was from Racow and not specially bucolic in taste?"

"Forgotten, settled and done. Count Medrikoff is now married, steady, serious; a man of substance against whose character it is indelicate to throw some little early peccadillos, fruits of a young and overgenerous blood."

These Wysocki Russians are surely going the new way, will soon become real Sunday school veterans. Ah, me, for that old Byzantine atmosphere of only a few years ago! What—my very dear beloved Russians becoming sensible? The outrage of it! The world is surely becoming very dull, when a Muscovite goes to

raising beets." This was of course somewhat the soliloquy I indulged in. But what was the use of bothering the pensioner to relate tales he did not wish to divulge? He knew enough to entertain me the rest of the day. So I soon had all the latest gossip of the *Ianowska salon*.

But I confessed, I believe, that I am curious, and to explain what follows, if explanation is necessary, I must say that I love to see people love one another; and, being a psychologist, I simply gloat over the romance of a love—it matters little where it is born or how long it lives. I don't even mind going to Cupid's funeral—and I have been to many. But the play, the development of the story, is what fascinates me.

This second confession explains, of course, why, after my *déjeuner*, I wandered about the boulevards, obsessed by the missing links in my problem. Medrikoff wise and a plowman, saved from the brimstone of Paris! Sonia, somewhere settled in Paris; and Wysocki!

A Russian god, full of youth and riotous extravagance; a delicious little Muscovite princess holding him in bondage by the most irresistible of voices, of manner, of intellect, with the passion of a Slav woman thrown in for good measure—all this settled in three years? All gone to seed, in Paris? There may be miracles, but miracles do not happen on the Boulevard de la Madeleine.

So I did what you would do yourself: I became a detective for—oh, not for long, as before night I knew that Mme. Alexandrovna resided very quietly with her aunt at Bois Colombes.

Miracles do occur surely, I thought, as I addressed a line to the lady, but it is worth while witnessing one, anyhow.

So it came to pass that one afternoon I found myself in a little modest villa in truly bucolic Bois Colombes, and was ushered in a simple reception room by a maid of simple mien.

Sonia soon entered, but a Sonia of 1911, not of the vintage of 1908. Three years of bottling, probably at Bois Colombes, had taken the sparkle off the champagne. Of the devil-may-care, laughing voice there was just a little bub-

bling and nothing more. The Oriental eyes full of fire were there, to be sure, and the marvelously beautiful blue-black tresses and the oval pale face. But the big black circles around the wondrous expressive eyelids told what had taken the sparkle off the champagne. The song bird was wounded sorely, I saw that; and my words must have been the echoes of my thoughts, as mere men are poor actors.

So I spoke of the weather, of Chantilly, the *salon* and what not, and wished that my cursed curiosity had not led me into such a trap!

Women are wonderfully intuitive, and after half an hour of fencing with empty words, Sonia, who knew, simply as though she were finishing a story she had begun some time before and left unfinished, quietly said: "You want to know, and yet you dare not ask me why I am here—why my first and last romance is shattered and my soul is in anguish. You were *our* friend; I owe it to you to tell you the truth, which is simple enough, as it is only once again that of a woman's weakness, a sweetheart's foolishness." Just imagine me, who had known the giddy butterfly, sitting uncomfortably on the edge of a chair and listening to the philosopher. A miracle, sure enough.

"I loved Medrikoff more than my life, and I loved him better than he could love; that was the mistake I made or the one fate made for me. I really do not know. Medrikoff had wealth, and I took his temporary infatuation for real love and forgot the day of reckoning," said the little philosopher with a suppressed sigh.

"The day came when, with a million, and no more millions behind the original one, we managed to see that our reckless existence had brought us within sight of the last ducats. A few hundred thousands and the end would come. When, where, I cared not, but he did. The foolish lad became suddenly scared at the sight of his diminishing pile. Medrikoff, the jovial boy, became the somber, calculating Slav. It frightened me, and I jumped, as best I could, to the rescue, that my lovely boy should be returned to me through money, sacrifice, anything.

"I had met at the Ianowska's a very fascinating American gentleman, a journalist of great standing and of powerful influence in international politics and finance, Charles Sydney Barrett. You, of course, know him well on your side of the ocean. Well, Barrett, though elderly, is not indifferent to whatever charm our sex possesses, and I was not unlovely then, as you may remember." Here, of course, nod and smile obligato, yet most voluntary. "He became very attentive—I might even say extremely so, embarrassingly so. At an unguarded moment I told him that I had some Russian Imperial bonds that I could not sell; that I was almost distracted, and that if he could tell me how to dispose of them I would promise almost everything in exchange.

"Meanwhile Alexis Medrikoff was getting better and more gay every day. 'You can trust me,' said I to him. 'Barrett will retrieve our fortunes, and then we will go away, far away, to some unknown little village, and love each other forever more.'

"Of course it became necessary for me to play my part, be diplomatic and see a great deal of the keen old gentleman. A man, at any age, who has caught his car, sits and dozes leisurely—that is a love axiom, as I understand it now; therefore when a man who loves you, and whom you love not especially, has the making of your fortune in hand, he must be kept on the hot gridiron or all is in the fire. And so—

"Charles Sydney Barrett became my business agent, my broker, and heaven knows what, or how he accomplished the miracle. But one thing is sure: his great newspapers published glowing accounts of the Russian government bonds, and your good people bought them at a fabulous and manufactured price through his financial connections with your great bankers. Anyway, what is certain is that 500,000 rubles came to my credit at my bankers' in five months, and that Alexis Medrikoff the real was brought back to me. But my friend Barrett, of course, like a good broker, wanted his commission. You can imagine my situation. Here I was, a detached lady of high

degree, or supposed to be, living with her aunt in a fashionable apartment, and Mr. Barrett most pressing, too pressing in his constant attention—and my Alexis. During the period of financing I had, I must admit, neglected my love—I had to; but he seemed to understand and approve, and to be so much amused at the antics of my venerable broker that I never thought of the inevitable.

"While I was saving *our* fortune, a man, a devil in disguise, was ruining *mine!* You know Wysocki, the arch-Machiavelli of the Ianowska crowd? Well, he lived on Alexis, became his friend, counselor and confessor; he learned the scheme, appropriated it, made some money through it and gave the information to his brother; and the net result of my high financing is that I have glided over the escutcheon of the Wysocki—that Marousia Wysocki, brought to Paris by her uncle, robbed

me of Count Medrikoff's affection and name. Now they all live together somewhere in Seine-et-Oise, and I am here with my old aunt, alone with my heart-ache, buried in this hole! Not only have I lost the man I loved, but even the respect of the dear old gentleman who so generously fleeced your good countrymen that the Medrikoff's coffers might be filled again and the ruined Wysockis parade in an ancient castle.

"For a woman's entrance into the finance game, it is certainly a success, is it not?" And her marvelous eyes flashed with the fire of primitive hate and ill-restrained anger; her eyes filled with tears and her voice became husky. Yet, a moment afterward, she had herself in hand. The Russian woman when cornered is no weakling and does not seek consolation or sympathy—she recoils upon herself to spring again.

Wall Street is wonderful! Even love is registered on its ticker.



## REBELLION

By Katherine Nelson

**H**IGH Judge, where is the sin that we seek love?  
 We to whom priests gave sentence in our youth  
 To mate with men who have no soul above  
 Earth grubbing; who, the bridal night, forsooth,  
 Killed sparks that rise from instinct fires of life,  
 And left us frozen things, alone to fashion  
 Our souls to dust, masked with the name of wife—  
 Long years of youth—love years—the years of passion  
 Yawning before us. So, shamming to the end,  
 All shriveled by the side of him we wed,  
 Hoping that peace may ripen years attend,  
 Mere odalisques are we—well housed, well fed.

Ah! Some of us unclothed, unhoused, unfed,  
 Would liefer strike the gipsy trail unwed,  
 And love and live and sing beneath the sky,  
 And sing and live and love—and, loving, die.

# MOON MAGIC

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

THE Moon drops back her purple robe  
Of clouds that trail the shadow sea,  
And glides in silk of silver mist  
Down starlit lanes of amethyst;  
And, lo, she smiles so magically  
That shapes of day scorned to the sight  
Become the glories of the night.

This shattered tree I saw by day,  
Weak after battles with the blast,  
Stands robed in garb of victory,  
With gaunt arms lifting bare and free,  
As some wild warrior of the past.  
Crowned as no king is crowned it stands,  
The sentinel of the shadowlands.

On this old house I saw by day,  
With mossgrown roof and rotting eaves,  
The benediction of the Moon  
Has fallen, and I hear the croon  
Of nunlike winds and lisp of leaves.  
And somewhere in the rooms above  
I hear the restful voice of Love.

This old hill road I saw by day  
Wind long and gray and silently,  
Now leads to bloom-sweet vales of night,  
And fairy folk with lanterns bright  
Go dancing on the way with me.  
Yet once I cursed on this same road  
The weary miles, the crushing load.

O Moon, smile magic on my heart  
Some silver night within the years,  
As on the tree that lost its leaves,  
As on the house with rotting eaves,  
As on the road I trod with tears—  
And somewhere in the rooms above  
Oh, leave the restful voice of Love!

# THE ODALISQUE

By Leroy Scott

THE young woman stood alone, thought-enclouded, a black statue in her obscure corner of this temple of splendid silence. The temple walls were of white enamel inlaid with panels of mirrors, and down the middle glistened a row of alabaster columns. The floor had the gloss and glow of the carnelian of a high priest's breastplate, and over its dim reaches were spread broad, soundless rugs, of a dark rich, soothing red. Fragile chairs of gilt stood about, chairs almost impalpable; and also there were deeply upholstered chairs and divans—velvet—of crimson, languorous ease. Through all the far spaces of the room was a diffused light from electric chandeliers, hushed with opalescent globes.

Here money and the accumulated skill of the ages had achieved their perfect effort to flatter subtly, to bring to an unresisting acquiescence the will and senses of the votaries who entered.

Before one of the mirroring panels stood a female automaton, her black garb margined at wrists and throat with white. Upon her blonde head sat a creation of raven velvet and sweeping snowy plumes. Beside her stood another automation in black, only of a vastly superior rank in the temple's hierarchy, with a stiff and lofty bearing that was a composite of dowager and high priestess. Beside them, deep in the luxurious embrace of a crimson chair, sat a being of a different creation—one almost might say of a different God—in finest texture of painfulest make, the skins of the silver fox cast loosely from about her, a perfect complexion resting upon a perfect hand perfectly gloved, a being toward whom a hundred thou-

sand years of evolution had blindly striven as their ultimate goal. And there at last she sat, completed, civilization's masterpiece.

The lady gazed with languid, critical interest at the jewel of plume and velvet upon the automaton's head. The automaton slowly pivoted before the mirror to show the points of the headgear. Presently the lady spoke:

"May I see it on brown hair—a shade near my own?"

The dowager automaton carefully lifted the hat from the blonde hair and said in a low voice: "That will do, Miss Jackson." The automaton vanished, as noiselessly as a person in a tale of magic. Then the high priestess said in a louder but still hushed tone, "Miss Harris!"

The young woman who had been standing thoughtful in her corner started, and appeared before the mirror as swiftly and silently as another character in an Eastern tale. The hat was carefully adjusted upon her head, and she, too, pivoted slowly before the perfect creature in the chair.

This second automaton was trimly built, trimly dressed. From the perfect heel of her shoe to the edging of her throat, her clothes, though simple, appeared without a flaw. And such clothes cost money. Her cheeks were a trifle hollow and her eyes somewhat sunken, but these deficiencies were concealed to the uncritical by a skillful laying-on of rouge and penciling of eyebrows and eyelashes—so that, in a subdued and minor key, the automaton made a striking show. Her brown hair was done in intricate convolutions, elaborate rococo, in similar pattern, though

not so finely finished, to that of the elegant creature before whom she performed.

As she pivoted about, her expressionless, uninterested eyes stole glances at the mirror. The big hat, with its graceful sweeping lines, looked stunning upon her—stunning. She knew it. But her face revealed nothing.

The lady studied the effect of the hat upon this new hair—a brown the sister shade of her own. "You said it was how much?" she queried.

"Ninety-eight dollars," answered the high priestess.

"You may send it up."

Five minutes later the favorite of evolution, her silver foxes drawn snugly about her, stepped into her motor brougham. And yet a little later a youth in uniform was bearing a great box toward her address. The hat had cost the shrewd masters of this temple of crimson silence twenty-two dollars.

Back in her corner, the brown-haired automaton again stood thinking—thinking painfully. Presently the dowager priestess passed behind her.

"Miss Harris, I just noticed that the edge of a pleat of your skirt was worn through."

That was all, and the high priestess passed on. But the automaton flushed at the margins of the rouge. She had known of that worn place. The skirt, though otherwise a good skirt, was now useless. One could not wear mended garments here.

She thought yet more painfully—more acutely.

## II

STANDING there amid the velvet hush of this rich temple, she had been thinking upon the intricate problem of her budget. Before the high priestess had spoken, she had already been thinking of how she could manage to get a new skirt, and how she could get other needed things. Her hire was nine dollars a week.

When the masters of the temple had advanced her from a stock girl to her present place as a model in their great

salesroom—being prompted to which benevolent action by her figure and her unusual hair—she had at first exulted over the change as an almost unbelievable promotion. At last her cramping financial boundaries had magically enlarged; she could expand beyond her stingy, meager life, could have some of the long wished-for comforts, and the wear and tear and worry of living within her weekly dollars was now forever gone. But quickly she had discovered that with the upward leap of income there had come an upward leap of expenditure. To be worthy to stand in the presence of the temple's exalted patrons, she must spend money on hitherto unnecessary things: her superficial raiment must be perfection, her nails must be regularly subjected to the artistry of manicures, her hair regularly done in the prevailing mode by coiffeurs. Outwardly her estate had vastly improved, but these new essentials consumed her entire increase. She still lived in the same tiny, dark room, still had to keep her weekly expenditure for food scrupulously within two dollars. Ends were even harder to make meet than ever.

And what made it harder, she now had new desires. She knew she looked striking in the splendid hats in which she posed with graceful, finished unconcern—far better than the sometimes plain podgy persons whose easy dollars sent them home. She knew that in handsome clothes she would be a rarely handsome woman. She knew it! And she longed for them with the utter longing of the person to whom a thing is forever and unalterably denied. And at times she burned with an intense, unreasoning resentment against those women who, as a matter of course, as though it were as much as part of the order of the universe as the rising of the sun, effortlessly acquired the things which never could be hers.

But at the present moment her thoughts were all upon the profound problem of the financing of the purchase of a new skirt. She could not accumulate little bits of savings from room rent, carfare, manicuring, hairdressing; those



were fixed and regular charges. Food alone remained. There she had already stinted herself to the utmost; already she was under-nourished, and had been under-nourished for years. She knew that. But on food she must somehow save.

When from some mysterious distance six o'clock sounded out like a subdued call to prayers, she slipped on her coat—a well fitting coat—and her hat—a becoming hat, though cheap, for she had taste—and stepped through the glassy portals of the temple forth into the crisp, light-gemmed duskiness of the street. The difficulties of the skirt had at length begotten in her a spirit of recklessness; and this was heightened by a resurgence of the resentment that had swept through her while pivoting in masked indifference with the hat of sweeping lines before the woman who by the merest volition had made it her own—the woman who had commanded her forth because her hair matched hers. She was feeling the embittering torment of those eternal questions, “Why?” and “What’s the use?”

As she moved along amid the homeward thousands she was aware that bold eyes of males were ever glancing toward her. So it had been during the six months that she had been an odalisque of fashion, accoutered in superior garb. The glances did not surprise her, nor offend her; in her present mood, they evoked a pleasurable excitement.

Hanging to a strap in her crowded car, she had gone perhaps half the distance home when she felt a hand lightly touch her shoulder and heard a voice in her ears: “Pardon me, but I believe you dropped this.”

The handkerchief was in truth hers. She thanked its restorer, and for a moment her eyes met his. He was a handsome, pleasant-looking, well dressed young man. She gazed back at the car window—well aware, however, that his admiring eyes were fixed upon her.

When she left the car, she was conscious that he, too, stepped from it. A moment later he was at her side.

“It seems our ways are the same,” he said, with an agreeable little laugh,

lifting his hat. “I suppose it’s no harm for us to walk together.”

She knew well enough that he was lying about this being his direction. This was not the first time since her beauty had been brought out, accented, by good clothes that strange men had made advances. But never before had a mood such as was now hers coincided with these overtures. With a tingling recklessness she gave him an evasive answer, which he boldly accepted as consent. For several blocks they talked exciting nothings; then suddenly he came to a pause.

“See here,” said he, with his frank, agreeable laugh, “I’m a poor lonesome nobody, doomed to eat his dinner in the solitary torment of his own society. And I bore myself nearly to death. Can’t you save me by eating with me?”

She was not thinking of that dingy, smelly, soup-stained basement restaurant where her protesting stomach received its chief meal of her day; consciously at least that had no place in her mind. All her sensations were defiant, breathless excitement. She refused him, put him off, fenced with him—but did not order him away; and soon she yielded a daring acquiescence.

There was no occasion for her to go home to dress, for this dress in which she served in the splendid temple was her best; and so, a little later, they were sitting *vis-à-vis* in a quiet restaurant, between them a table crowded with the most ingratiating and nourishing food she had ever eaten, and with a silent-footed, wordless genius in black hovering over them to relieve them of the exertion of moving a dish the half of an inch. The taste of the food was a heavenly revelation to her; its essence rushed with an exultant, pleasurable pain through the starved avenues of her body. And always the man’s eyes were fixed upon her in bold, but not overbold, admiration. And she knew she looked handsome, striking—in her one decent dress, whose worn place was hardly observable at night. She knew it, and thrilled over it.

When the man paid the black-garbed genius of their table, her quick eyes

noted that the amount was greater than her weekly hire. In considerably less than two hours more had been spent upon her food than she had ever dared spend in two weeks.

After the dinner there was a musical comedy, in an orchestra seat—a phantasmagoria of bright-garbed, accurately darting figures, of inane orchestral and vocal tinkling—but exciting, beautiful! And after the play was a supper—through a hallway that gave a glimpse into a great, brilliant, gilded room, with snowy cloths and a plentitude of priceless food and bare-bosomed scintillant ladies just a trifle too vivacious; and from the hall up a stairway into a cosy little room with Indian red hangings and a single table.

The supper was choicer than the dinner and more unobtrusively served, and there was a sunny, amber wine that leaped with a pagan delight in the joy of living. He urged this fluid sunlight upon her. A small something within her awoke and whispered that it would be better if she were not here. But the wine danced more wildly in its pagan joy, and the whisper was unheeded.

The man's dark eyes glowed more warmly. "You are wondrously beautiful!" he whispered.

She denied it—and laughed joyously.

"If you had on the clothes we saw below, you'd make the handsomest woman there look a fright!" he breathed more ardently.

She laughed, and tingled electrically to her furthest nerve. She denied his declaration but half believed it, and saw that he believed it wholly.

When the attendant was done with the last triviality of his service and had been sent away, the young man rose and came toward her. At this moment, at the look in his face, she rose, too. "You *are* beautiful!" he whispered. And he took her in his arms and kissed her.

Within her there was a sudden revulsion.

"I'm not that kind!" she cried.

She tore away from his arms, swiftly slipped into her coat, and, breast heaving, glared at him.

"I'm not that kind!" she repeated.

### III

SHE should have walked out with despicable words. She knew she should. But—she let him take her home in a taxi, after his prompt apologies. He was respectful in the extreme, and at her door he did not overstep the familiarity of a courteous handshake. But when he left her, he bore a semi-promise that she would relieve his boredom on the following evening.

She lay awake most of the night in excited thought. And all the next day, as she posed in the softly lighted hush of the temple before wondrously garbed creatures of miraculous resource and leisure—looking calm, uninterested, passionless—she was a-quiver with the question: should she go or should she not? Mere shell of beauty and fashion that she was, filled with painfulest poverty and its infinitude of worrying penny problems, this was the first definite chance that had ever come to her to taste of the lightness and richness of life. Often before she had looked into the future, and she had seen only work, monotonous work, in this her present shrine or some other—work and a gilded poverty. Love, and perhaps a home, she had not seen. The man who might perhaps love her, him she could not love, nor could she accept his meager offerings. The temple wherein she was a ministrant had fixed its standard upon her soul, the standard of ease and luxurious show, just as it had fixed its inexorable standard of vesture upon her body—these standards, and never the possibility of earning or honestly having the means for their satisfaction. Dreary, dreary, dreary—that was her vista of the future.

When the deep bronze tones of the temple's gong released her into the street, she was still wavering. Still the struggle was continuing between a deep native instinct, dwarfed by circumstances, and which circumstances would perhaps never allow to swell into a full, sane strength—between this and the combined allurements of all last night had offered. Several times she stood aside, as it were, and looked upon herself as

upon another person, and wondered what that other person would decide to do.

But at the appointed hour she was at the rendezvous.

The evening was much the same as its predecessor; and there was another evening, and another, and another—exquisite food, the theater, color, music that set the blood to singing its wanton melody. He was always agreeable, and never crossed the line, or but a very little, of respectful courtesy. But gradually she felt the rudimentary instinct that had cautioned her against this course grow weaker; she felt herself drifting—rapidly; felt herself grow more reckless, more free—yes, and more happy.

Early one afternoon she complained to the dowager priestess of severe indisposition and was excused. Half an hour later she met him. First they bought a gown that needed not a single alteration (hers was a perfect figure; without her figure she could not have been a lesser priestess of the temple) and an evening cloak. The gown was a late Parisian importation of filmiest mousseline over a silken foundation that glinted mistily with every magic shade. The prices made her gasp, but he paid them smilingly. Then a hat, a wonderful hat, in an elaborate establishment like her own, wherein a young woman had to pivot about for her better inspection—then shoes—then gloves—then the more intimate garments of her new wardrobe. When they came to these last he drew aside, first insisting that she buy nothing but the very finest.

The purchases ended, she made a rough computation. In an afternoon she had spent more than her earnings for a year.

When she reached home at six, after an hour over tea with him, she found her purchases all waiting in her tiny room. They had all been ordered sent by messenger. Excitedly she began the change. The silken underwear snuggled flatteringly against the soft skin that had never known anything but darned and patched and repatched cotton. She thrilled at its firm, crackling, voluptuous

caress, and she thrilled with each new garment that she put on.

Five hours later, the play over, they sat in a vast, glittering palace of gaiety where food was given a peculiar and much prized excellence by being served at half a hundred times its value. Its gilded splendor was perhaps fictitious; adroitly laid-on paint and cunningly molded paster—like the splendor of the scores of sparkling, spirited ladies who begemmed the tables. But in artificial light, and at so gaily uncritical an hour, the splendor of both sufficed.

For the first time he was in evening clothes. His dark eyes glowed across the table upon her fragile beauty.

"You are the queen of them all!" he exclaimed softly.

She knew it. Had she not, the way in which male eyes from other tables were constantly seeking her out would have told her. She had long known that, given the garniture, she would stand apart among womenkind. And now at last her time was come!

In her reaction from her starved life, she joyed in this extravagance. She was intoxicated with it all. She loved what she saw in the mirrored wall beside her—her slender white arms, her bare shoulders (they needed a little plumping, to be sure), the graceful forward curve of her flower stalk neck, the thickness and rich sheen of her brown hair—all brought out, set off, by the wonderful Paris gown and the marvelous hat whose great white plumes swept downward and softly kissed the V of her back. She loved the chatter, the light, the laughter, the suffused murmur of mysterious hidden music, the fragrance of delicate foods, the admiring glances of men. She was shivery, all thrills—breathless as to what was coming next. And she was excitedly gay; and she thought she was very happy.

"You are a wonder!" breathed her companion.

She smiled at him. She was under no illusions concerning him. She understood him—thoroughly. He had tried to seize her with a single movement, and had failed. He had changed his tactics. Now he was playing her, like

a skillful angler who has hooked a shining fish; and he was enjoying the playing of her, and was quite willing to wait the best moment to land his splendid catch.

And she was under no illusions concerning herself—concerning the near future, or the future that lay beyond that. She saw it all. She knew exactly whither she was bound. She knew exactly.

#### IV

BUT the wisest cannot foretell with exactitude the course of his life beyond the present moment. Life is so ambuscaded with complexities—chance, accident, the inter-action of other lives upon our own, the slow or sudden rising of a quality within ourselves of whose existence we were unaware and upon whose influence we therefore had not counted.

There came two trifling interruptions. She was to have met him the following evening—she knew full well that the time of landing was close at hand—but she received a telegram that he had been unexpectedly summoned to Chicago on business. This was interruption number one. Since her evening was thus made empty, she decided to accept the invitation of a friend who had been a stock girl with her and who had married less than a year before. Here entered interruption number two.

Her friend had married one of the odd million lower hirelings of the city's commerce, and lived far up in the hundreds in a flat so tiny that it might have been the chambers of an ice chest rearranged in horizontal order. In the little parlor, where everyone's knees almost touched, there was a second guest—a friend and fellow worker of the husband, a commonplace-looking young man in ready made clothing. He flushed at her superior presence, and gave her an awkward, heavy hand when they were introduced. His talk seemed even more clumsy and constrained than his person. But she was aware that several times his eyes were stealing timorously toward her.

"May," said her friend, when they were out in the kitchen preparing the modest refection, "you sure have made a hit right on the spot with Joe Lacey! My, I've never seen a man knocked so stiff! And I say, May, he's a fine steady fellow, good wages—a man you can count on, you know."

Joe took her home. He relaxed somewhat upon the street car, but she could but contrast this crude, ill clothed young man with the well tailored, easy-mannered, clever gentleman who was to have been her partner for the evening. But a difference of quite another sort that she keenly sensed was that Joe Lacey's look of admiration was very unlike that of the absent cavalier—it expressed a different attitude, a different desire, a different end.

At her door he asked, with considerable difficulty, permission to take her to the theater the following evening. Rather indifferently she agreed. Accordingly the next night they were out together—she in her working clothes—and upon her were spent dimes where before had been spent dollars. Other evenings with him ensued. He became less stiff in his manner; she found him increasingly agreeable and pleasant, though still she adjudged him rather ordinary. What she liked most about him was the look in his shy, gray eyes. She did not pause to study him; analysis was not her forte; but she vaguely felt that, such as he was, Joe was "a man you can count on." And she had a feeling, when he looked at her and the tide of color flooded to the edge of his yellow hair, that Joe was in earnest, for life.

On the day of the other man's return they went to what was billed as "the jolliest show on Broadway"—she in her magic, clinging, queen making garments. He was all soft adoration. And she looked her best, felt her gayest; she was altogether charming. She loved the feel of this exquisite finery; she loved this brilliant, sensuous atmosphere.

They were leaving the theater, bound for supper at a gay restaurant, and a laugh was in her throat—when suddenly she shrank back into the door. He

turned and stared amazed into her pale face and frightened eyes.

"What's the matter?"

"I—I feel sick," she breathed. "I must go home."

He expostulated, but she insisted and had her way. In the motor cab she still shivered at the thought—what would the passing Joe have thought had he turned his head and seen her in company with this fine gentleman, garbed in these fine clothes? She had not guessed till this moment of threatened confrontation that what Joe thought was of any considerable importance to her. She was taken by surprise; she did not understand this chaos loosened suddenly within her.

As for what Joe would have thought, had he seen her—she knew well enough what would have been his thought!

While the cab sped on the man beside her spoke of a plan for the following night, to which she nervously agreed—the theater again, after it supper with a few near friends in his apartment.

All the next day, as she pivoted before the temple's patrons, beneath her perfect inexpression she was ebullient with emotion. Night come, and its release, she laid off her black working clothes and hurried into her transforming apparel. Never had the embrace of these rare fabrics been quite so exquisite. Hatted and cloaked she stood before her scant mirror. Never before had its blurred, uncertain surface returned quite so ravishing an image.

That midnight supper in his apartment, she knew how it was expected that it should end.

Athrill, breathless, she glanced at her nickeled clock. It was forty minutes past six. She was to be in the ladies' room of an appointed restaurant at seven. She had just enough time.

She reached for the knob of her door. Then turbulent indecision again laid hold of her. She paused—sank down on the edge of her bed. The counter visions rose before her—of a tiny flat like her friend's, with pillbox rooms—of Joe's commonplace but trusty face—of his clear and honest eyes furtively gazing at her with their shy worship. A man you

could count on. She sat staring at the visions, thinking.

When next she looked at her dollar clock, the hand was at seven. She sprang up. At this moment, at the restaurant, the man was sending an attendant into the ladies' room to call her.

But again she paused, and sank upon the bed. She gazed with pale face and parted lips at the black hand of the clock, starting its slow circle of another hour. She saw the man waiting for her, still waiting, and wondering why she did not come—she saw luxury, ease, beauty, slipping away from her—slipping away—forever; and she wondered if Joe really cared.

She stared notionless at the clock till the hand was at eight—till it stood at nine. Then slowly she took off every precious thing, folded them and laid them away carefully in the drawers of her shaky chiffonier.

## V

HER dominant thought was now all about Joe—Joe, her supreme and saving accident. Did he really care? And could she win and hold him—and how?

The next evening when she reached her room she found a note from the other man on stiff quarto club paper. By some mistake they had doubtless missed each other the previous evening, he wrote, and he made an appointment for that night.

The vision of luxury rose again radiantly before her, called her. She did not go. But she opened her dresser and gazed at the beautiful garments there. She could never wear them now. She would never dare let Joe see her in them. Never. For her, they were dead.

She would sell them. The thought of parting shot her full of pain. But she needed money—needed it sorely; needed it, for one thing, to replace her shop skirt, with its tiny rent. Yes, she would sell them.

It is to be feared that her soul would have been sadly frowned upon by those perfect nebulae inhabiting gentlemen who teach ethics.

Two days later came another note on stiff club paper. Its tone was of cynical good nature. He understood the situation, he wrote; he had been "stung"; she had used him as long as she had cared to, then had tossed him aside.

The second evening after that, when she came home, a gentleman awaited her in the stuffy, slattern parlor of her rooming house. He was stout, dark, black-browed—ominous. He remarked that she might prefer that their talk should take place in private, and fearfully she led him up to her room.

Her fear was justified. He informed her that he was from a private detective agency, and that he was under instructions from her gentleman friend to get back certain garments of value. She refused. Half hysterically, she denied having any such things. Implacably he informed her that he had been shadowing her, that he had seen her in company with a certain young gentleman, that he would inform said gentleman of everything if she did not turn over the goods.

He carried away the fortune's worth of shimmering, magic garments, clumsily done up in newspapers; and all evening she lay sobbing upon her bed.

## VI

YET more dominantly were her thoughts now upon Joe, and how to draw him. It was her trimness, her beauty, she felt, that had first seized his imagination. Therefore she must always seem trim and beautiful to him.

Her one black skirt again swelled to a large and acute problem. She had repaired it with cunning needle; otherwise during the excitement of the past two weeks she had forgotten the matter. But the scrutinizing high priestess had recently spoken to her again, and in a tone of warning. She knew she must have the new skirt for her job's sake. Also, for a larger reason—it would help her in the eyes of Joe.

How should she get the money for it? Gathering her courage, she went to the august representative of the masters of the temple (the masters themselves were

scattered persons who held pieces of paper, by virtue whereof every half-year they received certain monies); but the frock-coated deputy regretted to inform her that the profits of the business were not such as would warrant the dollar increase that she asked. She knew she might have won had she tried intimidation—spoken of leaving, or lied about a better offer elsewhere—but she feared to take the risk. So she turned to the sole item in her budget on which she could economize, and began to live upon half her previous half-rations. Bread with weak tea became the chief and most substantial article of her regimen.

Frequently she was out with Joe in the evenings, but only after dinner, for Joe lacked the social boldness to ask her to sit across from him at a public table—lacked that or some other subdivision of courage. He was still shy and awkward, but he was always admiring, and seemed to regard her with something akin to reverent awe.

She wondered if his liking was root deep—if it was going to grow, till some day there would be an understanding between them—or whether he would later turn to some other girl. She wondered, ever more poignantly.

She would have preferred him to have been more bold.

A petty accident that happened assumed for her almost the dire proportions of a tragedy. One evening her black crêpe waist caught on a nail in her door, and a rent was gashed half across the sleeve. The money she had thus far saved had to be diverted from the skirt to the more immediate need of a new waist.

As the days passed, and the weeks, she felt her strength slipping from her. The few extravagant meals she had eaten had meant no more to her years-starved body than it means to a freezing man to be brought a moment before a fire, only to be carried out again into the arctic cold. She thought of borrowing from Joe, but feared that to ask him might frighten him away. At the last she could not digest, or keep upon her stomach, even the poor food she felt she could afford.



It became an increasing strain to perform her temple rites. To make good for the deepening pallor of her cheeks she laid on the rouge more heavily. She was often dizzy, frequently could scarcely hold herself upon her feet. And one day, while turning this way and that before a patron, on her head a marvelous, million-colored thing of iridescent bird breasts, she suddenly sank upon the crimson carpet in a faint.

She should have heeded that warning. But she did not understand. And had she understood, she would not have known what to do.

She continued about her work. Three nights later, in the street amid the home-going crowd, the dizziness surged into her once more—her muscles gave way—and all was blank.

## VII

THEN, faintly, from far, far above, voices came down to her.

"One of the worst cases of prolonged under-nutrition I have ever seen," said one voice. "Her blood is thin as water."

Another voice descended. Its first words were a soulful curse, then—"Why can't those"—another curse—"stores pay their women enough to keep alive on?"

She heard more, and presently her eyes fluttered weakly open. Over her was a white covering, and she was in a white bed and in a white-walled room. Above her was the grave face of a gray-bearded, spectacled man in dark clothes; beside him was a young man in a white coat, and at the foot of her bed stood a woman in what she recognized to be a nurse's costume.

"She's conscious!" whispered the younger man.

The older man nodded his head. She felt his fingers upon her pulse. It grew momentarily stronger under the stimulant. At length he spoke to her, slowly, that she might easily comprehend.

"There's no need telling you that you've almost starved yourself to death. You've nothing but water in your veins.

Your best chance is blood transfusion—understand? To have the blood of some strong, healthy person injected into you. We can find the person, but it will cost—fifty dollars, perhaps twenty-five. Have you any money?"

"No such sum as that," she answered.

"We'll do the best for you that we can," he said.

She did not need to ask him if her case was serious. She knew it; and besides, the mere look of his grave face told her.

Suddenly, Joe came into her mind—filled it. With an all-pervasive thrust of agony she realized that she was cut off from him! Picked up in the street as she had been, what chance was there for him to find her—if he cared to try to find her? She had lost him—lost him utterly! She was dizzy with the anguish of it!

And would he care when he learned that she was dead—if he learned it? Did she really mean anything to Joe? If only she could just see him, look into his eyes, before she died—for she knew that she was dying.

Yes, she had lost him—lost him in the dark!

Time passed—whether moments or days she knew not. They moved about her, the doctors and the nurse, and she limply suffered them to do their will. There were periods—instants or days?—when she was weakly conscious; there were periods when she did not know whether she were awake or dreaming—and then again there was oblivion. Once it seemed to her that across vasty distances she heard the voice of Joe; she seemed faintly to feel his presence. She did not then know whether life was in her, or whether the sense of Joe was merely an impression upon her unloosed soul, drifting afar through ether. But after that, sensation was no more.

## VIII

At length she seemed to float slowly, slowly upward out of a profound and age long nothingness; it was as though she were coming to a vague and bodiless

rebirth in empty space—and she seemed to be lying at delicate, feathery poise a universe away in the heart of a limitless, detached void.

So for a time.

Then consciousness began to quicken—faintly, ever so faintly, at first; then it seemed to rush in upon her. There was a tingling, a sparkle, through all her being. Vigor, an electric vigor, was pouring into her—pouring—pouring—pouring! She tried to raise her hands to rub open her eyes to view this miracle. But her right hand could not obey her will.

Startled, her eyes opened of their own accord. At first she saw only the white hospital ceiling. Then slowly she turned

her head to see why her right arm should be helpless. It was straight out at a right angle to her, swathed in bandages. And bound to it was another arm. Her eyes followed the arm to a sheeted figure in a bed beside her own. On the pillow was a white face—never had she seen it so white—staring eagerly at her.

The white face smiled.

"Joe!" she breathed.

He smiled again.

"Joe!" She gazed at him in thrilling awe. "Joe!" It seemed almost too much. She closed her eyes, and from between the tremulous lids dripped the hot tears as she realized the magnitude and full meaning of this her miracle.

They were in truth of one blood.



## A SONG FOR YOU

By Robert Loveman

THERE'S a song for you, and a song for me,  
 There's a song for everyone;  
 A song of love or a song of glee,  
 Or a song of duty done;  
 A song by day, and a song by night,  
 A song of joy, a song of right;  
 Let your merry soul with music throng.  
 Oh, hath your heart its share of song?

The rivers voice a vasty theme,  
 Majestic to the sea;  
 The sentient stars of evening beam  
 With mystic melody;  
 The firmament is glad with mirth,  
 Oh, happy, happy, happy earth!  
 Let music heal the hurt of wrong,  
 Sing till we have our share of song.



"JINKS is not very well, you know. He has been taking all kinds of stuff, but it hasn't cured him."  
 "What is his ailment?"  
 "Kleptomania."

# STOBS AND STOBBERY

By Francis Grierson

STOBBERY, like everything else, has had its evolution. The snobs of Thackeray's day cared only for titles; the snobs of a later period cared only for riches; while those of our day care mostly for the glamour of art. Snobbery is the great modern illusion; yet it has a form. It is like a glove with two hemispheres; one represents money, the other intellect. Much depends on the artists who know the chart of snobocracy as practical sailors know the seas. For they can, if they choose, avoid the rocks, skim by the shoals, shoot the social rapids with tact, bump themselves over the social Niagara in barrels of their own making and emerge from the whirlpool smiling and radiant.

Some people turn snobbery into a psychological science; others turn it into an art; with others it is a gift. There seems to be no limit to its forms, no bounds to its illusions. The average person wonders how it has come about that some men are self-made millionaires; the attainment of great riches is regarded as a mystery. This mystery is the cause of a certain kind of snobbery. On the other hand, all artistic achievement carries with it an element of illusion coupled with mystery. This illusion fascinates; and if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, artistic snobbery may be the sincerest form of imitation. I am aware of three physical causes that make for snobbishness—temperament, education and the influence of crowds; but these forms of the distemper are too obvious and material to be of much interest. A problem interests when it involves the complex and the enigmatical; and there is no more fascinating study for the true observer of human motives and human

action than that of the relation of the artist to the world of snobs. In the world of art there are but two kinds of snobs—the natural and the forced. The natural includes all those who seek to patronize people of talent without understanding what they do; the forced includes the people of talent who choose this method to compel the world to discuss their work.

One of the most curious things connected with the twentieth century is the fact that diplomatic energy has shifted from the world of politics to that of art. Our most accomplished diplomats are now found in that great world which includes all talents, from the painting of pictures to the writing of plays; all temperaments, from that of the practical pessimist to that of the utopian optimist. We are at the beginning of the greatest manifestation of culture since the age of Pericles. A single idea put into form is worth a whole tome of theories, and the art world of the present is as matter-of-fact as the world of business, and infinitely more psychic. In playing the fiddle and in writing poetry there is no place for attempts; to succeed in the first requires inimitable pathos, to succeed in the second illimitable passion; and the same reasoning applies to all work where emotion moves and intellect controls. But it is one thing to create works of art and another to handle the world of snobbery with skill. Here one needs the ready wit and the worldly wisdom of genius.

Whistler did extraordinary things apart from his genius as an artist. He surveyed the field of snobbery, parceled off the social sections until his mind was pigeonholed with tabs for every cir-

cumstance and tallies for every customer. He had special scales and weights for every kind of snob. He treated pride by the pound and vanity by the carat. He knew the difference between a social solitaire and a society carbuncle, painting or lancing as the case demanded. When he tied a blue ribbon to the lock of white hair on his head and wore an eyeglass, he added an open defiance to a secret knowledge of snobbery. He smiled inwardly while the superficial snobs laughed outwardly, thus publicly admitting their incapacity to understand. Wherever you find eccentricity united to art there you will find a bait for the snobocracy, and the skill with which the artistic spiders weave their webs for the houseflies of toadyism is a constant source of wonder and admiration for the student of art and the lover of talent.

It can be said of Liszt that he conducted the orchestra of snobbery with the baton of a musical Bonaparte. He chose his instruments from all the social strata while blowing his own trumpet the loudest and the longest. He took his seat among the highest as one crowned, and when clouds of incense hid him from the popular view his position was revealed by the sound of the royal kettledrums. The musical world never witnessed anything equal to his tactics. He manipulated the great organ of snobbery with all its pipes and pedals, and its piano with all its peccadillos. When his social instruments were well under control, by one master stroke he brought Richard Wagner out of obscurity! He assembled a company of royal highnesses, who sat for two hours listening to Wagner conducting his own music. The next day the master had ceased to be a prophet without honor in his own country. Without the thing called snobbery such a maneuver would have been impossible, and Wagner might have languished unknown for another decade. Liszt was skilled in the arts of snobbery before Thackeray wrote his "Book of Snobs." At a time when Eugene Sue promenaded the boulevards with red heels on his boots Liszt promenaded with a huge red umbrella while Theophile Gau-

tier achieved lasting fame by appearing at the Théâtre Français in a red waistcoat on that memorable night when Victor Hugo's "Hernani" ushered in a romantic movement which was to last for more than thirty years.

But England did not lag behind. Beau Brummell was the forerunner of all sorts of snobbish capers and maneuvers. By his innovations in dress and his unparalleled aplomb he attained to the presence of royalty, and ordered the king to summon the servant while at dinner. Beau Brummell was the first to put snobbery to practical use as a man of fashion.

Lord Lytton used it as a writer, Byron as a poet, Disraeli as a politician, Whistler as an artist, Liszt as a virtuoso. Brummell was a witty fool but Disraeli was a wise dandy; and even men of judgment are fascinated by the arts that spring from a knowledge of social life and social laws. Brummell's fundamental weakness lay in the fact that his system of snobbery was founded on a naive illusion—the illusion of dress. Take away his dandyism and there was nothing left but his wit—another illusion. Brummell's witty sallies were lacking in humor and tact, and tact is the practical wit of genius. Disraeli brought to dandyism the imagination of an artist and the inspiration of an innovator. He attracted snobs in three ways—by his dress, by his novels and by his political prestige. He handled his henchmen with delicate drams and his enemies with deadly epigrams. He had the audacity of Liszt, the boldness of Brummell and the genius that unified a scattered empire—he made Queen Victoria the Empress of India. He stormed the social barnyard as a mere chicken, entered the political cockpit before he had spurs and crowed himself into popularity before he became the only political bird of paradise in Parliament. He proceeded upward by easy and natural stages, never halting too long in any one position, never waiting till curiosity was on the wane. People wondered at this adventurer who was climbing to fame on a ladder of fashion, and "charlatan," "mountebank," "imposter," were epi-

thets that greeted each fresh triumph and each new departure. He was an Oriental poet who discussed politics in the "Asiatic style" in the most prosaic and *bourgeois* of all parliaments. He discarded poetic for political license. But in so doing he disclosed what Goethe calls the hallmark of "daemoniac genius." He became the whip of the whole parliamentary menagerie, bearded the lions in their lairs, lashed the tigers into submission and made the leopards long to change their seats as well as their indelible spots.

In those days there was a strange mixture of frank sentimentalism and rampant snobbery. There were but two kinds of sentimentalists—the creators of the sentimental, like Dickens, Mrs. Henry Wood, Rossetti, Tennyson or Burne Jones, and the people who loved and accepted what those artists and writers created. The sentimentalists are always sincere. They have no place for the wiles, the whims, the suggestions and the arts of snobbery. They admire frankly or reject frankly. They have no secret policy on which their words and actions turn. While Rossetti was painting melancholy portraits with long necks, Disraeli was pulling long faces in short parliaments; while Burne Jones was painting sentimental ladies and medieval knights, Disraelian genius more than counterbalanced the lotus languors of the Come-into-the-garden-Maudes of the mid-Victorian period.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing connected with Wagner's life was that he despised snobbery yet created a whole army of snobs who pretended to explain

his teaching and understand his music. Never was there a conqueror who had so many blind followers. Here was a master who ignored the snobocracy, yet the atmosphere of Bayreuth became polluted with the most offensive form of snobbery known in modern times. Is it the environment of fashion or is it the intellectual atmosphere of mystery that attracts so many moths to this electric arc of genius?

The hero worshipers, however, form a class apart. They display a sense of appreciation which is unknown in the world of snobbery. For, roughly speaking, the snobs demand some kind of sensation that hits the fancy, while at the same time they are ready to dismiss from their minds all thought of people who have failed to keep to the level of sensationalism and perpetual discussion. The inveterate snob will tell you how he prophesied the fame of this or that genius when genius comes by its own. But who can compute the combinations of snobbery and destiny? As, for example, when Liszt, in a Viennese salon garnished with archduchesses, purposely let his wine glass fall and the imperial ladies scrambled for the pieces. The effect produced by this incident was more magical than anything the king of pianists could produce by his fingers on the keyboard, and to have doubted his success after that would have been equivalent to high treason in the state or low tension in society.

Snobbery may have had a beginning but it has no end, and its *milieu* is as mobile as that of the wind that bloweth where it listeth.



WE call them new women because we dare not call them old.



FLATTERY is one of the cheap things in this world for which we generally have to pay dearly.

# BREAKING THE ENGAGEMENT

By Terrell Love Holliday

PERCY RICHPATER strode into the drawing room of his fiancée and sank despondently into a chair.

"Gracia," he announced hollowly, "it is my duty to release you from your engagement."

"You needn't begin doing your duty already," she answered graciously. "There'll be time enough for that after we're married—when I won't let you do anything else."

"But I must warn you," he insisted darkly, "that I have a past."

"That is what makes you so interesting, Percy. Besides," she asked sweetly, did you suppose that I thought you had a future?"

"I am a cigarette fiend," he said.

"What brand?" she demanded breathlessly.

"Pill Mill's."

"Oh, that's all right," she assured him, much relieved. "I use 'La Comtesse'; you won't be bothering mine."

"I drink like a fish," declared Percy.

"Are you a judge of good wines?" she questioned searchingly.

"A supreme judge," he asserted, pride gleaming through his gloom; "a regular chief justice."

"Good," she approved. "Wine dealers are so crooked."

"I'm fast," warned Percy.

"I know," she admitted *sotto voce*; "I had a dickens of a time catching you." Aloud she said kindly: "Well, if I can't brake you down to my gait, I'll speed up

to yours; I'll be my own chaperon then."

"I am fickle as the wind," he advised.

"Fine!" cried Gracia. "I am the same, and I was afraid you'd annoy me after I grew tired of you."

"I gamble," said Percy.

"Do you win?"

"Seldom."

"That is bad." Gracia looked grave. "Well"—her face brightened—"until I can teach you how to play, we shall have to play together and keep the money in the family."

"I fear that I am losing my mind," mourned Percy.

"I can keep a secret," she proudly replied. "Nobody shall ever know unless you advertise for it."

"In my disposition," said he, "I am harsh, tyrannical and overbearing."

Gracia's silvery laugh rang out gaily. "So was father, but mother's gentle influence has softened him until now he lets her buy his cigars and tell him how to vote. It's no use, Percy dear," she said, blowing him a kiss. "'With all thy faults I love thee still.'"

"But, hang it all, Gracia," cried he in desperation, "I can't marry you. Father has failed—everything's gone to smash."

"Why didn't you say so an hour ago?" she asked with evident annoyance, ringing for the footman to show him out. "And yet you men have the nerve to say that a woman wastes words, rambles all round her subject before she comes to the point!"





# THE WORLD

By Rita Weiman

"IT'S a terrible book. I'm amazed at a girl of her age having written it."

"And, my dear, to sign her own name! She might at least have used a man's. The best authors have done it. Look at George Eliot and George Sand."

"Why, of course. It's positively—brazen. And now Hilda giving this reception for her, sanctioning—" The speaker bit the word in two—"But then Hilda always will stretch a point to be unusual."

"Shocking, I should say. I wouldn't have come if it hadn't been for—"

What force had propelled Mrs. Hunter beyond her power of resistance we leave to your imagination, as it was left to her companion's. For the two women had reached the drawing room and paused in the hall before being announced. The wide open gilt doors framed the group directly facing them. In the center stood their hostess, Hilda Grier. Tall, with a natural grace sacrificed to fashion, she was all sparkle—her gown of gold cloth, her jewels, her teeth displayed in a rather daring smile—all but her eyes. They were dull and restless, as though ever weary of what they saw at hand, ever on the lookout for novelty. She was shaking hands with a young college professor, fair-haired, chubby-faced, fit emblem of the overthrow of an old superstition that intellect without stoop shoulders and heavy spectacles could not be intellect at all. Mrs. Grier turned and presented the youthful Socrates to Miss Hamilton, her guest of honor.

Simultaneously, as though moved by common impulse, the two women in the doorway leveled lorgnettes. The tiny

figure of the girl beside Mrs. Grier was as familiar as their own children. But as author of a novel whose morality could be expressed only by the prefix "im"—as such she was new to them. In her small body charged with the electric joy of success, in her mass of bronze hair, her great shining eyes, in the soft outlines of her creamy gauze dress, there must be some change, some touch of the book she had perpetrated.

"Mrs. Carrington Hunter—Mrs. James Bonwell," mumbled the footman as they swept forward, mingling a faint wave of scent with the variety that already thickened the air.

Jean Hamilton stretched out eager hands. The professor was at that moment murmuring a tribute to her "marvellous power of psychological analysis," but she turned from him. These women had been friends of her mother—that adored mother whose spirit spread above her like a benediction, whose influence and encouragement in the bitter struggle for achievement even death could not tear away. With a sudden tightening of her throat, tears choking her, she bent forward. They had come in her hour of triumph to make her feel less poignantly the absence of that one who could never again be with her. She knew it. And her little, sensitive figure vibrated; her dark, brilliant eyes glowed.

"How do you do, my dear?" Mrs. Hunter took the uttermost tips of her fingers in a frigid clasp—and dropped them.

"This must be a very happy day for you." The tone in which Mrs. Bonwell uttered the words indicated the reverse.

Then both women turned abruptly to Hilda Grier.

Jean took a startled backward step—as though two hands had been raised to strike her. She stared in bewilderment. She did not understand.

Yet over all the room—heavier than the mist of heat and perfume—hung that cloud of condemnation. The two women just entered had exercised the privilege of long intimacy to express it subtly, if not openly. That was the only difference. Among the disjointed groups in corners, on divans, beside shaded lamps, clustered about the doorways, through the surge of small talk, it could be felt. Eyes turned continuously to Jean, the women in disapproval not untinged with curiosity, the men in curiosity not untinged with disapproval. And occasionally those eyes bent floorward as a remark particularly personal was dared.

"A girl like that—to write such a book!"

"Yes, what can she know about the feelings and thoughts and sufferings of a—er—that kind of woman? Nothing—without actually having had the *experience*!" The last word, hardly breathed, blazed forth in capitals. And men whose faces showed the lines with which time revenges itself for ill use—these men smiled, said nothing.

"Mr. Edward Trumbull," announced the footman at somewhat higher pitch—as though to impress the importance of the prominent lawyer's name.

Jean looked up swiftly—then down, conscious of the revelation in her eyes. As the new arrival reached her, she spoke under her breath—sharp, broken phrases astonishing from one to whom words came magically.

"Oh, I'm glad—so glad! I thought—perhaps you wouldn't get back in time. And this—all this—hasn't been complete without you."

"I came particularly to see you. I'm leaving town again tonight. No, don't ask why"—as her lips opened to protest, the glow of her face instantly shadowed. "I've traveled all day just to be here—isn't that enough? But can't you get away soon? I want to talk to you—alone."

"Yes, yes. I'll make some excuse.

I'll manage somehow. In a few moments. It's late, anyway."

As he passed on through the thinning crowd, she looked after him. One of the few men who had appeared in sack suits, Edward Trumbull's figure stamped itself not so much for height or breadth as for bearing. The set of his head, large—almost too large for his height, the sureness of stride, the suggestion of power—all contrived to distinguish the man whose features were by no means striking. He had the rare magnetism that draws all eyes. Men and women bowed cordially, pointing him out as one of the foremost young criminal lawyers in the East. Trumbull had just turned forty.

He disappeared into the music room and Jean turned back to her duties.

But scarcely fifteen minutes later a footman was despatched with a message. In the hall Jean waited impatiently, pulling over her shoulders a long velvet cloak whose bronze folds matched her hair.

"Hilda's going to tell them I was tired," she whispered, taking his arm as they hurried down the wide, curving flight of stairs. "And I've never been less so." She laughed happily. "I've never felt so keen, so alive—I've never felt the effort of living so worth while."

He helped her into a waiting taxicab and gave her address. The welcome sound of the slamming door closed out the world. Her head dipped suddenly toward his shoulder. Then she straightened, realizing that cabs had windows with shades undrawn.

He laughed and slipped an arm around her. The rather stern lines of his mouth relaxed. "You're just a baby, after all—aren't you, dear?" And he dared what she had not—bent his head to hers in the deeper shadow of the cab.

"I want to be—to you"—she voiced the eternal longing of the woman in love. Another pause. Then she looked up, her smile exultant. "Still, I'll be twenty-six only two days longer. Maybe I'm not making the most of those two days! I've crowded half a dozen interviews into this week just to face my conscience and the reporters with the information that I'm not yet twenty-

seven. Most of them think I'm even younger. The world, you know, looks on me as quite an infant prodigy."

"Is that the *only* way it looks on you?"

She was too lost in the cumulative joy of the day to catch his meaning. "But when people learn of my engagement to *you*, they may realize I've sense enough to have conceived the story that now they only half-believe I wrote."

He turned her about so that the street lamps flashing by illuminated her face. All his gaze registered were the great absorbing eyes. Indeed, an artist had once remarked that the Master Hand fashioned Jean Hamilton's eyes and brain, then attached the rest of her as an afterthought.

"I, too—I can't believe you wrote that book, little girl." Trumbull spoke finally in tone low, even hesitant. "You never gave me a hint of the theme or characters. And somehow I can't see *you* creating them—can't visualize it."

Keen, scrutinizing, his gaze was almost impersonal. For the first time Jean saw him as lawyer rather than friend or lover.

Theirs had been a whirlwind courtship: the meeting some three months past at a dinner given by Mrs. Grier; an instant smoldering interest; Trumbull's swift consciousness that this mite of a girl with her brilliant eyes, small palpitant body, her big mind and fine sensibilities, filled a void no other woman had made him acknowledge; and, on Jean's part, the surrender to his power, a passion of homage to that success which reflected her own desire. It had been a rush of emotion, a fevered, restless need of each other—love lacking the test of long companionship.

Now in his words, in his look, Jean felt a new element of wonder, uncertainty, even of doubt. Prior to the publication of her book, he had gone to Washington to urge a pardon for a client whose conviction on technical grounds had aroused widespread interest. And his letters, always brief, had made such slight mention of the novel that Jean fancied stress of work had prevented his reading it.

She answered him, vague uneasiness

replacing the thrill in her voice. "Oh, then you *have* read it! I sent you the first copy I received—but I'd an idea that perhaps you were too busy to look it over. You scarcely spoke of it in your letters—why not?"

"I wanted to talk to you. I couldn't express myself in writing."

"H'm—the discretion of the law, afraid to put anything in black and white—is that it?" She laughed lightly, yet disappointment swept a shadow across her face. Not a word of praise had he given. And the homage of the literary world sank suddenly into insignificance. "Think of it," she added hastily, eager to impress him—"the book's been out only four weeks, and it's already going into a second edition."

"If only it could be suppressed!" he burst out, then halted—for Jean's little body had stiffened within his arm.

"Sup—" She sat bolt upright, doubting what she had heard.

"That's what I've come from Washington to see you about—I had to talk to you. Until the President settles the Manville case, I can't get back for good. But I couldn't stand it any longer. Jean, dearest, do you know what they're saying—what they're daring to intimate about you?"

"Who?" She had pulled away from his arms and veered about, facing him.

"They—the world—everybody."

"What do they say—tell me! No, wait"—as the cab stopped short at the curb—"wait until we're upstairs." Without pausing to let him help her, she sprang out and flew up the steps of the apartment house.

Trumbull followed quickly—up the steps, into the elevator. Under the glare of the electric light her face was white and questioning, her slim body tense.

When the car had shot downward, leaving them at her door, Trumbull caught the hand that held her latchkey. "Dear, I didn't intend to tell you that way. I've upset you. But it's been on my mind for weeks—I had to get it off. And then, this afternoon, when I overheard in that crowd—"

"But you've told me nothing." Hur-

riedly she drew away her hand to insert the key. Before the door had closed behind them, she turned to him. "Now—please—just what do you mean?"

Trumbull reached for her cloak. But she let it slip from her shoulders in a heap to the floor, and crossed the hall to the library. They were evidently alone in the apartment. Miss Hamilton, the aunt whose home was Jean's, had left the reception at an early hour to complete a list of afternoon calls. The maid had gone out. Through the whole place no sound of movement could be heard. Trumbull looked about him, then stopped short on the threshold.

"Not here." He drew her back. "Take me to your study. But first—" He held out his arms. And when finally Jean started down the hall her lips were smiling, her step less hurried and nervous.

At the end of the corridor was a little room set in an alcove. From within, coals heaped high under the old marble mantel sent a silent red glare across the floor to a flat mahogany desk stacked with papers. The walls, in fact, seemed but a frame to the bigness of that desk. It occupied the room.

Jean switched on the sidelights, leaving dark the heavy cluster under a dome shade suspended directly over the desk. The room glowed softly, and from the shadows above the mantel came the outlines of a picture. It was a copy of Lefebvre's "Truth"—a woman of strong white body and fearless face, holding up-right her steady torch.

A copy of the book which had caused reviewers to regard Jean as a "discovery" lay on the desk. Near it were piled letters, batches of them still unopened, press clippings, cards, photographs to be used for reproduction. The sanctum of success it was, bearing marks of all the humble tribute and exquisite demands that like the tail of a comet attach to a sudden sweep into public favor.

Jean sent a swift, fond glance at them—to reassure herself—then sank into the desk chair.

"Now tell me," she continued as if there had been no interruption, "who are 'they'—and what do they say?"

He stood, his back to the fire, looking down at her. Lawyer-like, he answered her question with another. "Tell *me*—haven't people asked where you got the material for that story?"

"Yes, of course—some have."

"And how did you answer?"

"I told them, as politely as I could, to mind their own affairs."

"Don't you realize that was a polite way of inviting them to investigate yours?"

"I hadn't thought about it. An author picks up material wherever he can. That's his privilege, his right. Incidents that suggest nothing to others are full of color and purpose to him."

"Yes, to a man. But a woman has *not* the right—"

"I said 'author'—I did not designate sex." She had risen and stood at the side of her desk, tiny figure erect, head flung back, realizing at last the battle about to ensue, preparing for it.

"There are certain phases of life"—he spoke slowly, injecting into each word a definite significance—"certain phases to which women brought up in an atmosphere of culture and—er—delicacy close their eyes."

"Those women could be of greater service," came with equal significance, "by keeping their eyes open."

"You're only a girl!" He had started to pace up and down, head lowered. But his gaze, intent, did not once leave her. "You shouldn't know of such depths as you've—"

"Oh, but I do know. So do all girls who think—and from the time they begin to think, too."

"They may. They don't *write* about it."

"Ah, I see. It's not the knowledge you object to—it's my frank admission of it to the world." And she turned from him sharply, to hide the scorn that even her love could not conceal.

"That's not the point." He stopped short. Jean's back was to him, her shoulders heaving. His voice softened. "Jean, my little love, you can't understand." He strode over to the desk, close to her, and caught up the little clenched hand hidden under many folds

of gauze. Instantly the fingers relaxed. Like a young reed, she swayed to his arms.

Yet it was not so much physical response as appeal, a searching for that intuitive sympathy she herself so readily gave. Her sensitiveness, her divination of suffering, the tender reaching out to those in trouble and their quick response—these formed the keynote of her success. In her book the pulse of life was a force more potent than the cold analysis, however intellectual, of the writer who feels that pulse impersonally as a physician about to make his report.

But Trumbull's only answer to her appeal was his lips on hers. His mind apparently raced ahead with its own problem.

He drew her to the fireplace. They stood facing it, her figure illumined by the full red flare, his lost in shadow as he leaned against the mantel. "What can you know," he went on, "of the things I've been hearing ever since the publication of that book? Women twice your age, men about town—they look knowing at the mere mention of the name—men not fit to touch the hem of your dress—who should give you only respect—"

"I don't want the respect of such men. No woman has it."

"They're asking"—he paid no attention to her outburst; his manner was that of a man who habitually overrides all opposition—"they're asking *where* you got your experience—*when* you were abandoned, laughed at by the man you loved—and *who he is!*" He paused, having snapped out the words like bullets sure not to miss their mark.

"If I wanted to write about a murder, would I have to commit one to know how a murderer feels?" Like an answering shot, the question came.

An instant it seemed to stagger him. Then he laughed. "Woman's logic! It's not at all the same—"

"It is! Oh, Ned—won't you understand—can't you? It's because I *have* imagination, because I can put myself in another's place—feel, think, suffer as he does—that I'm able to write. If I couldn't—why, then I'd be like all these

people who dare to judge me—unable to understand an emotion outside the meager ones they feel, incapable of realizing any world but their own narrow one."

She was leaning anxiously forward, eyes alight not alone from the fire's flame, for she knew—what apparently he did not feel—that she was battling for an issue greater than her work, for the ideal that had set him above the weakness and prejudices of the crowd, above those who, like moles, keep their noses to the ground for tidbits of scandal.

During the pause that followed the outer door slammed. The maid, in hat and coat, her arm full of bundles, had entered and was coming down the hall. Her footsteps echoed through the stillness. Trumbull went quickly to the door of the study and closed it. He stood there an instant, started to speak—paused. And suddenly, with an unexpected flash, the domelight over the desk blazed full upon Jean. The key of it was located next to the doorway.

"I don't know why we're talking here in the dark," Trumbull said, coming back to her.

He placed himself before her, keeping her within the circle of blinding light, himself out of it. The lines about his mouth were cut deep, lips pressed hard together. His powerful head was thrust forward, his attitude the one—familiar to the courts—with which he began a cross-examination.

"I myself," he rapped out—"I cannot see how a girl of twenty-six could handle such a subject as you did without having experienced—"

"Wait—oh, please!" Jean pushed the tumbled bronze hair from her eyes and stood staring at him, incredulous, her breath sharp as though she had been running. "So that's why you've come from Washington—that's why you couldn't wait!" In a flash it had come to her—the reason for his hurried trip, the meaning of it. Yet she spoke haltingly. She could not bring herself to face his suspicion, that inherent jealousy—no, curiosity rather—which the man of the world always feels concerning the

life of the woman he loves before he entered it. His own illusions gone, he wonders—is *she* quite all she has led him to believe? Isn't there something she may be concealing, something in the past that—

"You weren't really impatient to see me," Jean forced herself to continue, "nor to talk about the book. No, not that, but to reassure yourself—to make certain all this slander is unfounded. That's why you've come to me. It's hard to believe, but that was your reason—your only one."

"That's not true." Trumbull vehemently defended himself. "You humiliate us both by imagining such a thing. I mean merely that I appreciate the world's viewpoint. It's not alone natural, it's inevitable—the conclusion that some experience in your own life opened your eyes to such conditions." And his gaze searched her to the soul.

"Well, then," she answered promptly, "it did."

Trumbull took a step nearer. His jaws clicked together. For an instant Jean saw him too bewildered for words.

She had turned, dropping into the desk chair, arms crossed on the stack of papers. Under her eyes were heavy circles; the lids drooped; she looked very tired. "You may as well know it—there was an experience, but not the kind you think—oh, yes, I know now that you, like the rest, have been asking yourself questions. Don't try to deny it—you'll always doubt unless I explain; unless I prove to you that, personally, I've nothing to conceal. My imagination—you don't credit it. Even though you've constant need of yours in the practice of your own profession"—a little smile appeared under her lashes—"you can't believe *I've* enough to put myself in the place of such a woman. Isn't that so—isn't it?"

Yet she did not wait for his reply. She leaned across the desk, speaking hurriedly, scarce above a whisper. "Three years ago, the summer after my mother died, Aunt Elizabeth took me abroad. And on the steamer there was a girl—she was very little older than I—who'd figured in an ugly divorce scandal.

Perhaps I was particularly keen to suffering just then—I don't know. I'd lost the dearest thing in the world—and at that time neither you nor success had come into my life to compensate. At any rate, the look on that woman's face haunted me. She hadn't been discreet enough to travel under an assumed name and everybody on the ship knew who she was. Consequently everybody avoided her. The women—those women who are taught to close their eyes, who are wondering now about me—I could almost feel them draw aside their skirts as they passed her chair. And all day long she sat huddled in it, trying to appear indifferent, to persuade herself she didn't care. You see, she loved the man in the case. All the hideous publicity she'd endured for his sake. His marriage had been the sort arranged to keep great wealth in two great families. And he'd convinced this girl she was 'the one woman.' She was going abroad with the understanding that he'd follow. They were to be married in London. All this I found out later, after I'd spoken to her, forced her to speak to me. For she didn't want to—not when she saw Aunt Elizabeth's indignation. Poor little thing—she was afraid of the stigma she'd cast. During the day she refused to sit with me, but at night up on deck, when no one could take notice, she used to. Oh, Ned, if you could have seen how she clung to me, the one *good* woman who had dared to offer her sympathy!" Jean's voice broke. Her head went down in her hands.

When she spoke again, Trumbull had to stoop to catch what she said. "Well, I don't suppose it all matters now. Six months later she—committed suicide—in London. He'd never followed her there. Her name had been used in the suit merely to cover that of the woman of his own set he's since married." She paused an instant. "That's all there is to tell. The world got the outside of the story from the newspapers; I got the inside of it from the woman herself. But I wouldn't have used even the barest outline—I couldn't have—if things had turned out as she expected. Oh, don't you see—it was the tragedy of her posi-

tion, the hopelessness of it, that gave me some reason for my book."

"Yes, I understand. My darling—if you knew how glad I am!" Trumbull was standing over her. His whole face had undergone a lightning change. His shoulders had straightened, the weight of a burden fallen from them. His lips were smiling, his eyes glinting with satisfaction. He looked positively happy. And this in spite of the fact that before she told her story he had harbored no suspicion against her.

Jean pushed him away. The fire in a sudden spurt of flame sent some red hot coals sizzling to the hearth. An added warmth and glow spread into the room. Yet she was trembling as from cold. "I've told you, all is grist that comes to the author's mill. Why, even this—this discussion of ours would make a good story," she added with a dry laugh.

"Listen to me—won't you?" Trumbull turned her about fiercely, hands pressed against her shoulders, his voice passionate as he bent over her. "If I've hurt you—if I seem severe, put yourself in my place, that's all. No, I won't let you go—you've got to listen to me. Sweetheart, any other woman writing that book—then I might have been able to regard it from an unprejudiced standpoint. But *my* woman—the woman who is to belong to me—the woman I adore—that's the reason, that's why I'm—oh, you know how much you mean to me!"

Silently she half swayed to him.

He seized his advantage. "It's you I've got to protect. If you'd published it anonymously—if you'd been married—"

She smiled. "Well, I'm going to be soon. Now—all your objections are overruled. Won't you—"

"Please, dear, be fair to me." He drew her close against him so that she could not look into his face, and his words were spoken softly like a caress. "It amounts to this: I cannot afford to have my wife sign her name to that kind of—stuff."

For an instant there was absolute silence. Jean's lips opened—not a sound

came from them. She tried to pull away—Trumbull held her fast.

"We must find some way—at once," he pursued, still softly as though he were making love to her, "to discontinue this publication under your name."

"But—but, Ned"—she got back her voice at last, inarticulate, breathless—"you don't—" She raised a hand to her throat. It was hard to bring out the words. Her eyes made an effort to meet his, and closed. "No, of course—how absurd! There's some mistake. You don't mean—you couldn't expect me to give up all I've gained for—for a mere—"

"For me," he corrected. "And, dear, I don't ask you to put aside your work. I'm not so unreasonable."

"What do you ask? That I choose between it and—"

"There can be no choice. You love me enough to consider me—or you don't. There's plenty of other literary material—the sort that couldn't reflect—"

She pulled away now and stood leaning against the desk, her hand on the book that lay there. "I've given two years of my life to this. I can't go backward. I can't write pink and white love stories—I don't want to."

"Jean"—his voice rasped with impatience—"when I came on here today I thought I'd have no difficulty making you see things in the proper light. You may despise the world—I depend on it for a living. Do you suppose it's the penniless, common lawbreaker who gives me my income? I can't afford to have people afraid of my wife's pen. They've got to regard her as one of them. You jeopardize your position—mine—by the type of work you do. And so—it must be stopped." He had stepped back. His face had gone hard as a mask.

Jean stood, a trifle unsteadily, her hands gripped to the desk top with a force that sent the veins jumping like blue cords. "Do I—ask what sort of law cases you handle? You've made your reputation on criminal ones—the uglier they are, the greater your triumph. You've extricated men you knew to be guilty—that's no secret—and the world



admires you for it. Time and again you've moved a jury to tears in the interest of an arrant scoundrel. You weren't even sincere in your pleading. And have I told you you'd no *right* to do it? No, I've been proud of your achievement—as I hoped, as I prayed you'd be proud of mine." A swift intake of breath, a brief second of hesitation, then she swept on, heedless of his fury, of her own fear. "The big, vital things of life—well, they're *my* law. You've no right to make this a personal issue—"

"And that's what I mean to you, is it?" he broke in. "Achievement—issues! God! If you cared a damn about me, do you think you'd be standing there arguing, justifying yourself? Why, you'd be glad—anxious to give up something, no matter what, because I asked it—for no other reason. You'd want no other! What are causes, what are issues to a woman when she—"

"Oh I do care, more, far more than you. Enough to put *you* ahead of a handful of people *who*—"

"Then love me enough—do this much for me." He strode toward her, the anger disappearing from his face as under the smooth touch of a woman's hand. For Jean was quivering from head to foot and she held onto the desk as though her very life depended upon its support. "Prove it to me! It's not such a great sacrifice I ask. And that's what woman's love is—that's what it ought to be."

She drew back, away from him, with a sense of self-contempt at the effort it cost her. "Tonight I've faced your

suspicion without a word of protest. Why, look how I've let you cross-question me! I've even amazed myself with the fear—yes, actual fear—that I might be hurting you by some careless word, when, in reality, I've been on the rack. Funny, isn't it? But that's love—woman's love, I mean. Well, I dare say it might carry me still further. I'd probably give up anything in the world for you—for *you*, Ned. But for hypocrisy—and that's what you're preaching now—open your eyes to it—for *that*, I will not sacrifice myself."

She had pulled herself erect. In a sort of desperate silence, she waited for his reply.

None came. Instead, there was a pause, vibrant with possibility, heavy and still with doubt. For a long time Trumbull stood looking down on her. Then, abruptly, he turned his back.

A moment later she rushed to the door that had banged behind him. His step sounded in the corridor—grew fainter—hesitated. He had paused for some sign from her! And fumbling with reckless fingers, Jean caught hold of the doorknob—pulled—twisted—gave a gasp of relief as she turned it.

Suddenly, though, she stopped. Her slender, vital figure straightened bolt-like. Every muscle went rigid, and slowly she backed against the half-open door, pushing it inch by inch until the latch clicked. When it was tight shut, forming a solid barrier, she stayed there leaning hard against it. Whatever her chance of happiness, she knew now it could not be found on the other side.



**T**O THE EDITOR—Why do the most worthless men often get the best wives?  
ANSWER—I don't know. Ask your husband.



**I**F a woman doesn't think a man is sincere when he flatters her it is generally his own fault.

# THE REGENERATION OF POPPY POPPINGILL

By Earle Snell

THE president would deny it; the deans would hold up hands in outraged protestation at suggestion of it, and the recorder's brow cloud would lower still darker if hint of it reached his ears. The fact remains, however, that not so many years since the entangling meshes of red tape, then incident to our beloved university, entrapped the feet, not of undergraduates alone, but of faculty as well. Hereto appends a story.

It was during these disconcerting times that Yeggertsen started to college. From up-country he came unheralded and unsung. He found a broken-down bed in a six by eight basement room, filled with dust, cobwebs and musty discarded magazines. In compensation for this and three meals a day, gulped hastily from a kitchen table, he washed dishes every evening.

This same Yeggertsen had a genuine temperament. It lay deep hidden, however, under six feet of exterior awkwardness. His number ten shoes hung heavily on his legs, and his hands pushed out disproportionate bulges from the pockets of his skimpy trousers. It was only a tremendous mop of yellow hair that indicated to the more observant that good Norse blood filled his veins and that ancient fires, kindled by Viking forbears, continued to smolder in his innermost soul. Often in the evenings, when his bared arms were immersed to the elbows in a great dishpan of steaming soapsuds, these same fires would flare up almost to the surface, and, in response to an indefinite call to be up and doing, he would send dishes skulling wildly along the

drainboard with a reckless disregard for breakage. It was on one of these occasions that Yeggertsen decided to write home for a track suit. After a week's waiting it came, pieced together from the family scrap bag. The trunks were black and the shirt of gorgeous green.

When Yeggertsen arrived at the oval on the following day, he found a fellow student there sitting on the ground and tightening the laces of his spiked shoes. At Yeggertsen's approach he looked up. "Hello!" he called cordially. "Going out for track?"

"Going to try," responded the freshman.

"Any experience?"

Yeggertsen shook his head.

The inquisitor looked over the new candidate amusedly. "Good work," he said. "Come on, jog round after me."

Round and round they went. To Yeggertsen, lumbering heavily behind the other's easy stride, it seemed that they ran for innumerable laps of indefinite length. Unseen hands seemed to grasp at his chest and press in on his ribs. The air became red hot and unbearable. The perspiration from his hair trickled into his eyes, half blinding him, and each separate movement of limb began to call for a conscious concentration of will. The other, however, when he stopped, was still breathing almost normally. He turned toward Yeggertsen with a good-humored chuckle.

"Freshman," he said, putting a hand on the latter's shoulder, "you'll probably not feel like running tomorrow, but, take it from me, you'll do."

By this time others were crowding the

track. Among them Yeggertsen recognized Brown, who sat at his right in Math. 1. Although he had never spoken to him before, he now mustered the courage to accost him.

"Who is that fellow," he questioned—"the one rounding the turn?"

Brown's gaze followed Yeggy's directing finger. "That's Delaney, the two-miler. He broke the record last year, and was only a freshman then, at that."

"Oh!" said Yeggertsen, and then added: "I suppose he's sure to win this year?"

"Not dead sure," corrected Brown. "Stanford has a new man from Yale. Newman's his name, and he has an Eastern 'rep' as long as your arm. They're betting their heads off on him and we're covering. It'll be a race for your life."

That evening as Yeggy, enraptured in clouds of rising steam, meditated over his dishpan, he rolled out his proverbial chariot and hooked it to its star. The particular celestial body to which he consigned his destiny was Delaney, two-miler.

During the succeeding weeks of training Yeggertsen found, beside Delaney, numerous other ambitious runners against whom to pit his stamina and speed. There were Wright, of the seniors, Sperry, the junior, and, not at all to be ignored, McVey and Dickle from his own class.

Yeggy's own development was satisfactory without promise of anything startling. The college public had hardly noticed him, except for the brilliancy of his track suit, until his finish in the inter-class field meet. On that occasion, with a sprint little short of sensational, he breasted out Sperry and finished third, close on Wright's heels.

This same meet is memorable, however, on quite another score. According to custom, the freshmen, having won, were allowed to float their banner from the flagpole. That evening Yeggertsen was called from his dishes to answer the telephone. At the other end was McVey agitated to breathlessness. The sophomores had rushed the flagpole, captured the banner, and Delaney, secreting it under his coat, had disappeared into the

fastness of Co-ed Canyon. Yeggy threw the receiver rattling to the hook. Down the back steps he leaped and dragged his trunk rope from under the dilapidated bed. The next moment his resounding footfalls echoed down the hard roadway.

All that night a stack of dirty dishes and a pan of chilled soapsuds awaited his return. For the first time in his life Yeggy had allowed the Viking flames to burst into full conflagration, and the same wild instincts that had impelled the marauding crusades of his Norse progenitors sent him skirting along the Berkeley hills, directing, commanding, fighting.

Until gray dawn the conflict raged. The faculty, called from warm sheets, remonstrated futilely. The police department was powerless. By sun-up the freshmen had a goodly number of hostages securely bound in a ravine beyond Grizzly Peak. By noon the sophomores, capitulating, secured the release of their companions by returning the banner, and for the rest of the day innumerable students, begrimed and ragged, straggled in, limping in motley groups along the academic streets of Berkeley.

From the president all down the line the powers-that-be were furious. Rushing of any kind was in flagrant disobedience to the faculty's latest promulgation. The student body held its breath in fearful expectancy. In Wednesday morning's mail Yeggertsen received a letter. It read:

Your presence is demanded this (Wednesday) afternoon at Professor Ezra Poppingill's office, Philosophy Building, at four o'clock.

Cold perspiration beaded Yeggy's forehead. Many tales had he heard about this Poppingill, chairman of the expulsion committee. Cold and unemotional, so they said, a logician who dissected and analyzed ruthlessly; who believed in life—and lived—only in so far as life could be proven by syllogism. Some years before he had come out from Harvard. Following him from the East there had also come a rumor—of doubtful veracity, it is true, and still more doubtful origin. Yet there were some who persisted in believing it and a great many more who repeated it—doubtless

because it made a good story through its very improbability. This same Poppingill, so it ran, who was now Professor Ezra, with numerous B's and M's attached to the end of his cognomen, had, when a student at Harvard, led the barbaric cheers of that institution. Furthermore, at that time an adoring college public had known him, not as Ezra, but by the loving title of Poppy—Poppy Poppingill.

That afternoon when Yeggy swung his awkward stride under the arched gateway that gives entrance to the campus, he chanced upon Delaney. As they sauntered up the walk that leads to North Hall they talked of the weather and of athletics—of track prospects, the new freshman pitcher, Bosworth, and Van Duzen, the tennis shark; but never a word did they mention of that agitating question that lay nearest the heart of the college. On reaching North Hall, however, both turned simultaneously up the path that runs to the door of the Philosophy Building. Delaney looked at Yeggertsen, and the light of understanding was in his eye.

Poppingill, grim and austere, was waiting for them. On either side sat the other two members of the committee, Zikelfuch, the German, and young Mansel, of the English department.

"Mr. Yeggertsen and Mr. Delaney, you come, I presume, in response to my summons." The chairman's voice was fixed and monotonous without inflection.

Delaney and Yeggertsen nodded.

"Mr. Yeggertsen, I take it for granted that when I use the term 'late rush' you will know what I mean. I understand that you were a prominent figure in that rush—very prominent—indeed, I might say one of the ringleaders. Am I correct?"

"You are," Yeggertsen replied.

"Your affirmation merely corroborates conclusions already deduced," said Professor Poppingill. "Your conduct, Mr. Yeggertsen, is most reprehensible—so much so that the committee on deportment has seen fit to refer your case to this committee. Students of your type are not desired by the university. Considering, however, that this is your

initial year, and trusting that you may profit by your experience, we have decided that you may continue in college but on probation. That is all."

Yeggertsen awaited Delaney outside. The latter, when he emerged, was a little pale.

"Well?" Yeggertsen asked anxiously.

"Chucked," said the other.

A great protest went up from the students. A delegation waited on the committee to ask reconsideration, and Poppingill, shrugging his shoulders, laughed sardonically in the spokesman's face. Then open mutiny and sedition were counseled. A meeting of fifty of the more rabid was called. The time for action had come. A strike, it was urged, was the only recourse. Yeggertsen, squatting in a corner, listened, and said:

"This sort of business is foolish."

"Quitter," sneered Robinson.

"I'm not quitting," corrected Yeggy. "I'm for action, but action that will make itself felt. I have a proposition to make."

If you want a detailed account of what that proposition was, look up the account of the affair in the newspaper files of the Bancroft Library. The reporters of that day did the story to their accustomed journalistic brown. They told how three members of the faculty, torn from their very doors at night by a score of masked students, were rushed, scantily clad, to the university pond, there immersed and left shivering in the brisk March wind, while they chopped out words of swift vengeance from between chattering teeth.

In the days of this story the detective efficiency of the committee on deportment was sure. The responsibility was fixed on Yeggertsen and his name again sent up to the committee. A meeting of that committee was called for the next Monday afternoon at two in Poppingill's office. At the stroke of the hour Poppingill and Mansel were there but no Zikelfuch. They waited for the quarter-hour tranquilly and then Poppingill began growing nervous. At half past he went to the telephone. He tried to reach the German in his office at North Hall, but the janitor reported the door locked.

Then he tried Zikelfuch's residence, only to be told that the number had been discontinued. At last in desperation he called up the recorder and asked for news of the missing colleague. When he burst back into the room, confronting Mansel, he was the incarnation of rage.

"He has quit us!" he exploded.

"Quit us!" echoed Mansel.

"Yes, quit! Scared out! He took this morning's Overland for the East. The only word he left was a letter of resignation."

Mansel, with finger pressed to his temple, whistled. "What shall we do?" he finally asked.

"Dol! Why, hold the meeting without him."

"But," remonstrated Mansel, "would that be regular? Is it not provided that the committee shall consist of three members? And, if so, does it not follow that no committee can exist when the number is reduced to two?"

"Granted," conceded Poppingill, "but as a matter of fact the membership still remains three. All appointments and resignations become effective only upon the president's approval. The president, being absent in the East, to remain there for some time, cannot have sanctioned Zikelfuch's resignation."

"Doubtless that is correct," agreed Mansel, "but to be sure I propose that we look up the exact wording."

For an hour they dug through dusty volumes. Then Poppingill, his finger pointing at the elusive article, announced: "There it is, and just as I said."

"Quite true," Mansel continued to agree, "but even so, we can take no action."

There it was in black and white:

All action taken by the committee on expulsion must be supported by a three-fourths vote of the entire committee.

Poppingill read it over again.

"But," he blustered, "it is outrageous, unheard of, a palpable absurdity. Three-fourths of three! Let's see—why, three-fourths of three are two and one-fourth. Ha, that's a good one! Who ever heard of a man divided in fourths? And if divided, which one should it be:

yourself, Brother Mansel, or I? The real meaning, however, is obvious. A mistake in copy doubtless. It should have read two-thirds."

"Quite possible," said Mansel, always agreeable but unconvinced. "But while it might have been, could have been or should have been any number of things, all that we are absolutely sure of is what it is, and that is three-fourths."

Poppingill remonstrated, but Mansel remained obdurate, a strict adherent to the letter of the law. "I would suggest," he said, "that we refer the matter back to the committee on deportment, which, as I understand, can take any action short of expulsion."

This is what was eventually done, and the committee, interpreting its authority most liberally, ordered Yeggertsen off the campus. Thus the real purpose of expulsion was seemingly accomplished. Technically, however, Yeggertsen was still a member of the university, and, as such, his name continued on the register.

The day after the committee's decision, Yeggy bundled together his scanty belongings and bade the college goodbye. Where he went the college, on its part, did not know, and would soon have ceased to care. As a matter of fact, he took the train back to Ukiah, and there found a job on an outlying farm. An enterprising inhabitant of this same Ukiah had erected signboards at every mile along the several roads converging in the somnolent town, and, by inscription thereto appended, announced approach to Goldberg's Pharmacy. Between the four-mile and three-mile signs there was a remarkably level stretch of road. Here every evening Yeggy, clad in track suit, would run from four to three and back again, much to the bewilderment of wide-eyed cows which gazed after him over intervening rails. A devoted half-breed attendant, who accompanied Yeggy on these occasions, would count off the seconds on a cheap nickel watch. The decreasing number of seconds each time reported elated Yeggertsen mightily.

A week before the intercollegiate field day, Yeggertsen came across a prospective write-up of the meet. It stated that

Wright had not realized hoped-for improvement, and that Newman's victory was only a question of yards. That night Yeggy lay long awake evolving his scheme. The next morning before breakfast he looked up the boss and drew his time. Ten minutes later he was sitting on the edge of his bunk and figuring various appropriations for his small fund. Five dollars would provide him with spiked running shoes; fifty cents would send a telegram to the track manager; three seventy-five would buy a ticket to Berkeley, and there would still be left a small balance for living expenses. This settled, he bundled up his track suit in a discarded newspaper and set out down the road to Ukiah.

In the meantime affairs had improved but slightly at the university. The students, while not openly rebellious, were sullenly angry. Poppingill despised them for it, and, to show them how little he regarded their insults, he determined to attend the field meet and there, if need be, brave their jeers. This is the real explanation of his presence there that day.

The rest of the story is a study in psychology. I will merely state the facts, leaving philosophical deductions to the more learned.

Seated beside Poppingill was McVey, who had failed to make the team. Although he did not at the time recognize his neighbor as the hated Poppingill, he later declared that he remembered distinctly that, no sooner had the Professor laid eyes on the cheer leader, than a reminiscent smile began to pull at the corners of his mouth. However this may be, it is undoubtedly true that Poppingill's regeneration began with the very first "Oski wow."

Soon afterward he noticed McVey bouncing up and down in high excitement, and, although he had never been guilty of exhibiting any fellow feeling for a student before, he mentally determined that he liked this youngster when McVey, assuming good comradeship, asked for a pencil with which to mark results on his scorecard. At the same time Poppingill decided that he, too, would like a scorecard, and in consequence paid a quarter for a program.

Moving closer up, he proposed to McVey that they add the points already registered. This done, Poppingill saw that the score was still about even, and, all at once, he began to hope very much that California would win.

"What sort of a show have we?" he asked.

"We'll win," the boy responded briefly.

"But the score is pretty even," insisted Poppingill.

"Aw, it's early yet. Just wait; nothing to it."

Poppingill received the reply rather shamefacedly. He suddenly realized that he was disgracefully ignorant of affairs at the college in which he instructed.

Then an apparition greeted his eyes. Across the oval was an athlete, running back and forth to limber up. He wore a huge-necked sweater of blue, and emblazoned on it was a tremendous white "Y." It set every drop of Poppingill's blood boiling at battle heat.

"Who is that?" he demanded, excitedly nudging McVey's ribs.

"That's Newman, Stanford's crack two-miler."

"But the sweater?"

"Oh," said McVey, "he's a transfer from Yale."

"Is he liable to win?" demanded Poppingill breathlessly.

"Sure to," announced McVey.

Poppingill, lips compressed, sat humped on the seat while he dug his finger nails deep into his palms.

"From Yale!" he groaned half aloud. "And sure to win!" Then he turned almost savagely toward McVey. "He mustn't—hear me, he mustn't!" And to give emphasis to this assertion Professor Ezra Poppingill swore. He turned to the program and found the two-mile entries. He swept the page with a hurried glance.

"How about Wright?"

"No chance."

"Or this other fellow—this Yeggertsen?"

"Yeggertsen!" echoed McVey, looking at the program. He gasped; Yeggertsen was unmistakably entered.

"Must be some error," declared McVey, and then he launched straight into the story. He told it from the students' standpoint, with all the students' bitterness. Poppingill, who had come to ignore, winced before the philippic.

Across the way the men were lining up for the two-mile race. Poppingill, his chin in both hands, watched them gloomily. For Stanford there were three entries beside Newman. For California Wright, Sperry and Dickle were there. The starter had already taken his distance behind the line when suddenly, just whence no one seemed to know, there came six feet of awkwardness, clad in running pants of black and shirt of gorgeous green. The California bleachers caught a long breath and then sent up a mighty cry of "Yeggertsen!"

McVey caught Poppingill by the shoulder. "By Gad, it *is*!" he cried. "It's Yeggy!"

"Can he win?" shouted back the Professor.

"No, but he's going to try; and he's braving Poppingill and the whole faculty to do it. That's what I call sand."

"But hasn't he some chance?" insisted Poppingill.

"Well, he was coming through pretty well at the last. He may have a surprise up his sleeve, but—"

The pistol cracked and the race was on. Newman sprang forward, taking the lead, with a teammate close on his heels. Then came Wright, Sperry and Dickle. The remaining two Stanford contestants and Yeggertsen brought up the rear. They held it pretty much this way for two of the three laps, and then Yeggertsen pulled up past Dickle and took the place behind Sperry. After three more laps he passed Sperry. Wright was already ahead of the second Stanford runner, and Yeggertsen, crowding this same one hard all down the stretch, passed him just as the seventh lap began. At the turn Newman quickened his stride. Wright, struggling

heroically to hold down the lead, began to falter. Then, with two laps left, Yeggertsen started a sprint. His stride was a revelation to the trainer. Newman, seeing him over his shoulder, quickened his own pace, but Yeggertsen had already picked up several yards and was still gaining. On the back stretch Newman received the cheers of the Stanford rooters with worried face. As the pistol announced the last lap Yeggertsen was less than ten yards behind. On the back stretch this was cut to five, and as they rounded the last turn they were running chest to chest. Thus they came down the track. Newman's head, thrown far back, was rocking from side to side, while Yeggy's arms flew fast and high. The rooters were on their feet, hands clenched, stamping, waving, crying out entreatingly.

Poppingill had crowded his way to the fence. His coat sleeves were drawn to the elbows. His hat was gone. Waving both arms, he was contributing to the general confusion, and then, just as the runners came opposite him, he threw his hands on a post; his body swung up, straightened out and shot forward. By a good twelve inches he had cleared the topmost strand of intervening barbed wire. With long, ungainly strides he started down the track beside Yeggertsen. The officials, dumfounded and unable to interfere, stared helplessly after him.

The tape was just ahead and still they ran chest to chest. Then Poppingill, leaning far over, shouted in Yeggertsen's ear.

"Now jump for it!" he yelled. "Jump!"

Yeggertsen heard and did jump. He felt the twine tighten across his chest and snap. His own name, shouted by a thousand voices, beat against his ears. Dimly he saw a great billowy sea of blue and gold surging, tossing, dashing madly. Then his knees weakened, his body swayed, and, pitching forward, he fell into the loving embrace of Poppy Poppingill.





# THE END OF THE PLAY

By Charlotte Teller

SHE had failed. But there was a conspiracy apparently among the members of the company not to let her know; and her very inexperience was her best protection. Even Miss Caldwell, who had had a fit of jealousy when it became evident that the new leading woman occupied the thoughts of both Scott, the manager, and Ayers, the juvenile lead, grew gently sympathetic; for it would be only a question of a few days now before the newcomer would be returned to that obscurity from which she had suddenly flashed upon them. All the beauty and magnetism of the intruder which had made it easy for John Scott to accept her recommendation from a New York office had not, after all, "got over the footlights." And yet Scott had been sure that she would make a "hit" because, in his office, she so closely resembled a "star" long in the ascendant. She was a slip of a thing, with big gray eyes and a quick smile whose half-seen pathos made its appeal to him. And she had, besides, a voice that rang true.

It was Scott's outburst of confidential prophecy that had made Weatherby, the character man, sure of *his* belief in the girl's talent—genius he called it under his breath—and had quieted his conscience as he became more and more interested in her, to the final point of falling in love. When that happened Weatherby was convinced that she was indeed a wonder woman with a big career ahead of her. And the conviction justified his proposal of marriage after the rehearsal one morning, when he had seen how the whole company were under the spell of her eyes and smile.

Why not admit that he was? They were sitting on property chairs by the letter box, waiting for the morning mail to be brought back by the callboy. It was an August day, and she sat limp and tired, leaning against a painted scene of snow used effectively for many years in one of Scott's best melodramas. Weatherby was fanning himself with a torn lampshade, and felt the stimulus of her gaze. Because he had always done character parts instead of lovesick heroes or matinee idol roles, he had been kept from conceit and vanity, and did not know apparently that he was unusually good to look upon—did not dream that she might find him so. This was the first time since he was young and twenty that he had felt his heart beat at the approach of woman. With this one the cynic's garment dropped from him and he felt real. He told her so as he stood there.

He did not see the curious little smile that came to her eyes and lips when he struggled with words and finally came to an end with: "You might just as well marry me now as later—because you're going to." Her reply made him start.

"That's exactly the way you ought to speak your lines in the last act," she said.

"I—I will after this," he stammered, and reached for her hand, but she drew back. He felt the sweat of fright start out all over him; he was so cold he shivered. "You—you won't?" he asked.

She looked into his frightened, doubting eyes for what seemed to him an age. He read indifference in her look, and then pity. He cursed himself for not

being someone she could marry, and wished he had never been born.

"Yes—I will," she said, and took two letters from Harry the callboy.

What a famous place this old stock theater was to become, he thought as he went out the door with her. When they reached their zenith, the two of them, they would point back to it as the place where they had first shone upon each other. In this thought he became slightly condescending to "old Scott," and promised himself he would always be a friend to the manager who had given him the chance to know her. But not even to Scott did he confide what had happened. They agreed, he and she, not to let anyone know until they reached New York and their fame was ringing out above the din of Broadway.

"Even then," he said to her, being wise in the ways of his world, "it may be best to be simply Beatrice Barnard and Jack Weatherby to the public, and keep our marriage secret." Agreeing upon this, they agreed upon the next step after a few startled questions and replies.

"You don't know a blessed thing about me except that I am here," she had said, and watched his face with curious keenness.

"And what, may I ask, do you know about me?" was his reply.

"But I know how to read people; that is my"—she corrected herself—"I have a talent for that."

"So have I," said Jack, and then, to prove their complete confidence in each other, they were married, just before the dress rehearsal.

The radiance of the ceremony made a glow for the whole company, who unsuspectingly basked in it but kept on looking mistakenly wise whenever Scott forsook his dragon ways to make some slight suggestion to her.

But she had failed on the opening night!

From the moment she had made her appearance, quiet, self-controlled, sure of her voice and lines, Jack had projected himself into the audience—and discovered that they were not "with

her," not even interested in her part in the play. Instead, they were welcoming the juvenile man and Miss Caldwell, their favorites now for several seasons. For the first time in years Jack Weatherby forgot his lines, and it was Beatrice who prompted him.

At the end of the first act he took her aside. "You must play to the audience," he said. "I don't believe you even know they are there." Her answer was a look in which she acknowledged him as the only human being of whom she was conscious. After that he could say no more. Besides, in a desperate flash he realized that if she did not feel the excitement of an audience—was not stimulated by it—she was not, by nature, an actress. His heart sank. During the rest of the play he tried to forget her and do what he could for the play itself. At wrong moments he played with such zeal and fervor that Miss Caldwell thought him trying to get her honors, and she grew sulky and dragged her scenes. It was a dull performance. When the house lights were put out Scott went to his office in deep gloom.

"There wasn't a break in the whole thing, was there?" queried Beatrice of Miss Caldwell as they took their nightly cheese sandwich together and she made surreptitious monograms on the tablecloth with her fork.

"But it wasn't a go," answered Miss Caldwell, and found herself unable to say more. The morning papers would put the blame where it belonged.

They did. But Beatrice had decided not to read the papers, for someone had told her to avoid reading criticisms, good or bad. Jack and she were at lunch when she said: "Mr. Scott told me yesterday that I would doubtless be spoiled and leave him for some other manager, but I shall prove to him that he has a loyal friend in me."

Jack looked at her in amazement and bolted. By force of habit he found himself with Scott, who was ready now to pour forth his pent-up rage of the night before.

"What do you know about women, anyway?" he snorted, making it a

criticism of the sex and not a query as to Jack's experience. "I'd 'a' been willing to bet she'd raise 'em to their feet, that she'd lift the chairs. I was so sure of her! And you could hear every word she said, too. If she'd been nervous or gone to pieces there'd be some hope."

"What did she say when you told her? How did she take it?" asked Jack limply, conscious of his own cowardice.

"Take it!" Scott beat the desk with the flat of his hand. "I don't know. I hadn't the nerve to go and find out. And last night every son of a gun ducked into their rooms. If she had asked me, I'd 'a' said it was immense and that she was the whole show. Good Lord!" His voice sank to a whisper. "I'm the one that's got to break it to her—that—" He paused.

"That what?" Jack sprang to his feet.

"That she's got to make room for someone else."

"Say, don't be in a hurry." Jack was struggling for a decision. He was staring at the floor. "Don't be in a hurry."

"Oh, I'm not hurrying," snarled Scott. "I'd *rather* play to an empty house," he went on ironically, "only there's a gentleman in the town you come from who wants to make a moving picture show of this place, and he's watching the box office."

Something must be done! Jack went back heavy-hearted to the dingy old hotel and asked to see "Miss Barnard." She came down to the parlor, which was a sad place and gave no chance even for a moment's caress. But here at last there was the inspiration. Jack paced the floor. He had never acted so well.

"You can see it yourself," he said. "We are not going to have any life of our own—if you stay on the stage."

"What!" Beatrice was amazed.

"That's what I have come to say," he said, growing strong as he spoke. "I want you to give up the stage—at once." He stood in front of her, his eyes aglow with new resolve, with the solution of the problem. "If you love me, you will. If you love me you'll go to old Scott this very afternoon and tell him that we are

married—or I'll go—and tell him—tell him that you can't serve two masters—"

"You and Scott?" she broke in.

"Love and Art," he retorted, his head thrown back, quite lost in the excitement of his experiment. He would not have been surprised at applause from the gallery. She looked at him, as from a long distance. "I think I see," she said, slowly; "you are jealous of me, jealous of my success. You all are, the whole company; not one of them has spoken to me of last night nor congratulated me on the performance. And you know that I didn't miss a line. You all thought I would, I suppose. You would have enjoyed sympathizing with me if I had failed. You are jealous of my success." She rose before he could gather his wits. "Jack Weatherby, I am disappointed in you." Then she left the room.

And he went out and gnashed his teeth at his own folly. He had accomplished nothing. Besides, he was married to her! And she was disappointed in him!

That night in her hurt pride she tried to forget these people she was playing with. What were they, anyway, but puppets for a playwright's purpose, monkeys imitating humans? She despised them; she obliterated them before her own eyes and drew herself away in spirit as their superior, as one who had achieved a triumph and then learned the bitter mockery of its loneliness. Of Jack Weatherby she took no notice whatever; the blow of her disappointment had stunned her. She did not have to draw away from him—she had been pushed away, beaten back by his own words. And in this mood she set a pace for the performance without knowing it, and the surprise of the rest of them had no chance to abate as scene after scene progressed and she kept the center of the stage.

"Gee," said the heavy man, whose oaths were always light, "she's fallen in love—or something!"

"You're a fool," replied Miss Caldwell. "Old Scott has given her"—she paused and then added—"what she deserved. I knew he'd see it straight,

all right." But Scott took Weatherby aside. "Didn't I tell you she had it in her?" he said. "Do I ever make a mistake in people? I guess not!" And the younger man made no answer. He knew that he alone, because of his attempt to help her, was responsible for the applause, the curtain calls and all the rest, and that no one knew it—no one would ever know it and give him credit. He had unwittingly sacrificed his happiness for the sake of her success. At that thought he grew so elated, so beautifully martyred that he forgot to go at his cue and had to be pushed from the wings by the juvenile lead, who liked him.

After the performance that night Beatrice refused to eat a sandwich with Miss Caldwell, who sniffed and said that was what success always did to people. And Jack drank three cocktails with Scott, knowing very well how they would make him feel the next morning. The world was a heavy, sodden place and its ways were beyond him; and as for women, what did he know about them?

For a week she carried things with a high hand. She never spoke to him except in the theater, and then only in the roles they were playing. With each utterance of her lines as the wronged wife of the play he felt himself put farther away from her, and his own lines became abject and spiritless. He wrote to her explaining what had really happened the day he had asked her to leave the stage, but he could not bring himself to send what he had written. Then he wrote letters begging forgiveness, and knew that he was lying by implication—but these she never answered. He saw she was pale and that her heart beat painfully in the scenes they shared, but she never saw *him*; she never looked beyond the surface of his part. He tried to put words in which the audience could not hear—and she paid no heed.

After all, he deserved it, he said; but that was no comfort.

He absented himself from Scott as much as possible, and refused to listen to that gentleman's plans for the future, when they would play upon Broadway and he, Scott, would be ac-

knowledgeed as the discoverer of Beatrice Barnard.

Scott, noticing his change of manner, was hurt and began to be critical; and then one night about a month after the eventful opening he summoned Weatherby to his office. He was dignified and pompous.

"You're all to the good, Weatherby," he said, "when your mind's on your work, but you're something fierce when it's not. This is your notice unless you take more interest in what's going on. And"—his look was dangerous—"you may just as well stop annoying Miss Barnard."

Jack stared and tried to recollect.

"She's a lady"—Scott drew himself up—"and she's to be treated like a lady."

"What do you mean?" Jack demanded furiously.

"That I heard what you said between your lines last night, and so did Caldwell; and what we're wondering is, why Miss Barnard doesn't report you and ask to have you fired."

Then Jack remembered his impassioned words on the stage the night before and tried to recall them exactly with other ears than his own. He did, and went pale, but there was nothing he could say; nothing but the truth of their marriage would justify the things which had been heard. Speechless, he left Scott, and no one saw him again until he went on in the first act that evening, when he played without either art or ambition.

This behavior on top of all that had gone before brought Scott to him at the close. Miss Caldwell's eye was glittering in nearby shadows.

"Our talk this morning don't seem to have inspired you." Scott's brow showed anger.

"I'll stay till the end of the week," answered Weatherby, and heard his own voice as another's. This was unexpected, and brought Scott to a point of calm reflection.

"Don't be hasty. The part you've got is the best you've ever had. If it had been written for you it couldn't 'a' been better."

"It's a damned stupid play," said Jack.

"What's that?" Scott almost sprang at him. "Ain't I goin' to make a fortune out of it?"

"You'd make money out of anything." This reply had the effect of quieting Scott instead of driving him on.

"Well, I guess I don't have to be told that," he said with pride. "And I am perfectly willing to make it worth your while to stay"—for where could he get another like Weatherby who could do the part of a drinking, sardonic and adorable husband to the heroine?

"You couldn't make it worth my while." Jack turned to go.

"See here!" Scott took hold of his arm. "I'll apologize for this morning. I oughtn't to 'a' mixed up in your affairs. I suppose I was cut up—sore, you know—because I didn't know she was that kind. I'd had her on a pedestal."

Jack shook off Scott's hand and turned on him. In another instant the manager would have measured his length on the littered floor of the office had not Miss Caldwell slipped in between them. He steadied himself.

"My leaving at the end of the week will prove that you didn't hear rightly," he said, and there was menace in his look which they both took note of.

"It'll prove you're a fool!" said Scott. This was the sort of ending Weatherby had never dreamed of that day he had married her for the sake of security—willing in his high moment of romance to content himself with the promise of a honeymoon when they got to New York. A miserable, unlovely ending! She would have a career, and he would go into obscurity. He thought dreadingly of the farm he had always meant to buy and never had. But wherever he might go, it would not be upon the stage again.

On Saturday he wrote a long letter of bitter reproach and stifled passion and offered to let her divorce him—to have the marriage annulled if she preferred that. When he had signed it he put it in the pocket of the old velvet smoking jacket which he wore in the last act of the play. Read it she must! He would give it to her instead of the fake letter

from the juvenile lead—who was his rival in the play.

For an hour before the curtain went up on Saturday night he paced his small dressing room, trying to think of anything except the one thing which claimed him: the abyss of departure. Each one of the four grimy walls of the room was a barrier between him and his future. He could see nothing ahead. He was too big to be conscious of what was, in reality, hurting him more than all else: the loss of a hope which he had cherished in blind faith through the years; that if he kept straight and strong he would some day be rewarded by a woman who would recognize the qualities he knew he possessed.

When his entrance came in the first act as John Raymond, he felt a sensation he had never had before in his life. He felt himself summoning the audience to take sides with him against the other man, against the woman herself, who didn't know what she wanted, didn't know her own mind.

His lines flashed their sarcasm and double meanings, and impressed Miss Caldwell and the juvenile lead. But he had in this act only a moment's scene with Beatrice when as the wife she entered the room to find her husband there after four years of absence. Her entrance was the cue for him to give her the look of dumb appeal. Tonight when Beatrice caught the look she started forward, which was not as the playwright had written it, and Weatherby's heart leaped. But in a moment she ignored him, as the author of the play *had* intended—and he, with the smile of bitter amusement which the scene demanded, went out, leaving her to be made love to by the other man, who as yet did not know she was married—in the play, or out of it.

The audience settled back with content. In spite of the author, they knew that this woman playing at philanthropy and politics loved the renegade of a husband who had such wonderful eyes. A new emotion swept the house, and the suspense at the end of the first act was what it had never been before. To Weatherby the applause was approval

of his purpose; he forgot all differences between himself and the role he was playing until the close of the second act. Then it seemed to him as Beatrice stood irresolute looking from his rival, expectant in the doorway, to his own huddled figure in the big chair, that she moved a little away from him and toward the other man. He lifted his head suddenly to look at her. And again the audience felt they had been let into a secret, that they had seen the birth of new will, new intention in this husband who was so complicating the life of these other two. They did not guess that Weatherby's role was to see nothing, to be too weak to move.

He went striding to his dressing room—and the ten minutes he spent there were indeed as long as the stretch of six months in the play wherein he was supposed to be growing convalescent after the attempt at suicide which had huddled him in that chair. As he waited he felt himself growing too strong—he might well be Hannan the "handcuff king." He was on the scene when the curtain rose on the last act, and for the first five minutes, while he was waiting for Beatrice's entrance, his impatience communicated itself to the audience. He moved them to tears when they saw him betraying his love of her in spite of himself. And when the door opened to admit her they were eager to see if she, too, felt the change for good in which they did. He was rigid for a moment in the realization that this was the last time he would ever see her make that entrance. But her indifference seemed to him cruel, and he began to wonder at his love for her. The slender barrier between love and hate trembled at his breath. He crossed the stage and gave her the note which the other man had left. It was his own; he knew by the way her hand trembled that she was in truth reading it. For an instant he thought it was going to wreck the make-believe between them. Then she grew hard and flung back her head to face him. She was refusing to acknowledge him.

A moment later he sat in the wings waiting for his next entrance, and rage

poured over him until he was bathed in its glistening flood. He had not, of course, seen what his audience saw: that Beatrice put her hand upon the doorknob and fought with her pride to let her call him back in spite of the author, the audience and the last act. The start she gave when she recognized how near she was to breaking down was read as intensity, and the seeing ones on the other side of the footlights wondered underneath their attraction why this play had not even greater praise. It deserved it; seldom, indeed, had a struggle between pride and love been more intensely acted.

All during the following scene between Beatrice and the other man, Weatherby nerved himself for the climax. In his note he had said that this was the last time they would ever play together—that he was going that night—that some day perhaps she would discover her mistake. The words of the note were beating underneath his spoken ones when he made his last entrance.

As the husband in the play he was now assured that he had failed to make her feel his love and his need of her. As it was written by the author, Raymond at the end discovered that his wife was going away because she could not face her own longing for him—and yet that her pride would not let her stay. Here at this point he had to make the explanation of his behavior and take her into his arms. As he spoke his lines his voice rang out with new meaning. Beatrice hung upon every word, and at the word which was her cue she sprang toward him.

He had always thought the lines weak at this place where she made excuse for herself; tonight they seemed contemptible. He listened with bent brows and set lips, his arms folded. He and the man in the play were one and the same to his mind. This was no stage where he stood, with a waiting audience beyond the footlights; it was his place of defense, his last stand. When he answered he was speaking the truth of himself which she must hear before he left. The audience thought it was the husband in the play—Beatrice never stirred—the

juvenile lead leaned forward in horror—which added to it all. "Ever since I first met you," said Weatherby, "I've been a fool to believe that you knew what you wanted, that you cared for me. I have been a fool to try and make you understand. You are not big enough to understand anything that's honest and real. You want a career, and you are going to have it, no matter what it costs; but before I go you are to know one thing—you owe it all to me! You were a failure, and I wanted to save you the humiliation, so I asked you to give it up—and then you thought I was jealous, that I wanted to absorb you and your life and take you away from your work. Good God—you weren't doing work; you were playing—and playing badly. And let me tell you this: the only thing which has ever saved women from being the laughing stock of the race is that we—the men—have tried to hide their failures.

"I hurt your pride when I asked you to leave your career and give yourself entirely to me? Well, that hurt was what roused you to do what you have been doing these last weeks. But you're not happy; you won't ever be happy again. But you'll be a success, and you're always to remember that I made you!"

With his last words he turned and crossed the full length of the stage and went out the door—into the dark wings. He heard the applause as from another world; it meant nothing to him until he saw the square of light cast by the opening of the door he had just closed and heard Beatrice's voice, terrified, frightened—"Jack!" That recalled him to himself, but before he could move she was there with her arms about him and her lips on his, and the curtain had been rung down on a stage whose one trembling occupant was the juvenile lead, rooted to the place where on all preceding nights he had had to observe a domestic reconciliation.

"What's this?" shouted Scott from the semi-darkness. "Get in for the picture!" and Weatherby found himself pushed from behind by the stupefied manager and dragged forward by Bea-

trice, who was laughing and crying at the same time. His high abstraction was as dramatic as a waiting audience could desire, and the curtain rose three times before he moved.

But when the thunder died away in front it broke forth in the rear. Scott was beside himself. He motioned the stage hands away from the scene which they were impatient to dismantle. "What in—"

He got no further. He was struck dumb on the edge of his outburst by seeing Beatrice throw her arms about Weatherby, and, drawing down his face to hers, cover it with tumultuous kisses in spite of rouged lips and grease paint. Had she gone quite mad? To Scott it was a moment of bitter suspense. Had not this dismissed actor robbed her of her curtain, taken her triumph from her—after confusing the scene by speaking lines which were in no manuscript of the play he, at least, had ever seen?

And was she so demented that she was thanking him for it? He was forced to listen to her inarticulate exclamations. "Oh, Jack! I knew it! I knew you could do it! You ought to have done it the first night. Why didn't you? Why didn't you?"

Scott found his tongue. "Say, what's it all about? What right has he got to—"

Beatrice turned rapturously to him, but her hand was clutching Weatherby's sleeve.

"I wrote this play for him! I've always thought he ought to do a part like this one. And you know what he did the first night, Mr. Scott—just lay down and made me carry the whole burden—thought that because I was a woman and had the most lines that it was my play. And you all acted so absurdly. None of you put the blame where it belonged—on him. And I was so terribly disappointed because, you see, I—I married him"—Scott's eyes opened—"because I thought if I were his wife he—he would be sure to play big in my eyes—and take what he deserved—and be a star! Oh, you little simple-minded, stupid baby! And she stood up on tiptoe again to kiss Weatherby,



whose face was paler than his make-up.

"Did you say *you* wrote the play?" asked Scott—beginning to think of business as a way of recovering his wits.

"All except the last speech," she answered. "And now we must go"—she paused with a touch of self-con-

sciousness—"we must go home and write it down before we—before we forget it."

Scott went into his office to think things over. The juvenile lead went after a handful of rice at an all-night restaurant. And Weatherby went into Beatrice's dressing room and used her cold cream.



## THE GALLOP AT DAYBREAK

By Charlton Lawrence Edholm

**M**ORE blue than summer night the sea; no moth  
 More white and flick'ring in the blue and out  
 Than yonder wind-flung foam flake, while about  
 The battling breakers (berserks, pale and wroth)  
 Four froth white gulls wing hov'ring o'er the froth.  
 Valkyries of the sea, they float and flout  
 The winds; beneath them surge the tides and shout,  
 And I shout, riding—I a raiding Goth!

Romance again flaunts high, the gale outbraves!  
 (They said that gold red gonfalon was hurled.)  
 Fierce sagas fill my ear with thund'ring staves,  
 And, as that brawling breaker lashed and curled,  
 Pealed Roland's horn through snarling of the waves—  
 Or echo from the Morning of the World?



## HEALTHY, WEALTHY AND WISE

By B. N. Connor

**W**HO wants to be healthy, wealthy and wise?  
 The healthy man is full of egotism;  
 The wise man is full of pessimism;  
 The wealthy man is full of rheumatism.

# THE NAWAB'S BEAR ROPE

By Michael White

UNDOUBTEDLY this story should be included in the regulations for political officers detailed to "bear lead," *i.e.*—take bodily charge of nizams, nawabs, maharajas and such folk when touring Occidental countries, particularly in visiting the city of New York. With footnotes and marginal pen scratchings by secretaries of not less than two thousand rupees a month standing, perhaps initiated even by His Excellency the Viceroy, it should illuminate the right path, and thereby avoid the possibility of a grave scandal. For the prestige of the British Empire in India, it is clearly inadvisable that police captains should grin broadly when reference is made to the peculiar habits of a nawab and newspaper reporters write in unholy mirth about the troubles of an Anglo-Indian political officer. Moreover, an American college professor of moral philosophy should not be brought into jeopardy of public shame—but that is anticipating matters.

With this preliminary, let it be understood that Grimstone-Bolitho—be careful of the hyphen distinguishing him from other Bolithos who may crawl upon this planet—had been ordered to escort His Highness the Nawab Mohammed Shah, Khan Bahadur Khan, Prince of Godi, to certain august festivities in London. Supreme authority bestowed upon Bolitho extensive control over the Nawab. His Highness was to be conducted with the ceremonial observances due to his rank, but it was left to Bolitho's judgment whether to let the Nawab run fairly loose at the end of the "bear rope," or hold him tightly by a short wind-up. It was for Bolitho to say whether His

Highness should indulge in light *divertissement*, or take a course of picture galleries and improving institutions in the capital cities visited. In reference to the matter a secretarial note added: "According to His Highness's manifest disposition and what may seem best for His Highness's comfort and the dignity of his state." This was by way of prudent forethought; and all might have gone well had not Bolitho interpreted his instructions to mean that by bringing home a model, straight walking nawab there would be a choice *mango* in the Secretariat for the holder of the "bear rope." If such was mere inference, the word "comfort" in the note as applied to His Highness clearly hinted at a light hand on the rope, but in his zeal for promotion Bolitho saw only one end, and went enthusiastically at his task of making life a burden for the innately easygoing and pleasure loving Nawab.

Bolitho began straightway after embarking His Highness and some half-dozen cutthroat-looking followers, pipe, slipper and sword bearers—politely termed "suite." With the praiseworthy object of directing the Nawab's mind into a right channel for the European trip, he secreted His Highness in a corner of the deck, and for hours poured into the royal ears translations from works of an improving nature. Incidentally Bolitho was rather proud of his correct Persian accent, a thing which had once stirred a lieutenant governor to sudden wrath, because it is hardly the part of deputies and assistants to correct the pronunciation of people who sit in high places. At first His Highness did not protest, not even shifting uneasily in

July, 1912—8.

his seat, but looked out across the sapphire brilliancy of the Indian Ocean in a dreamy mystified manner, as if it were beyond his understanding to account for the ways of kismet in handing him over to such a strange being as this Bolitho Sahib. But gradually—very slowly—it grew upon his imagination that somewhere in this tiresome man was a plot, a design perhaps to render him insane, so that when he returned to Godi another might be elevated upon the throne. In the annals of the State of Godi similar plans had been put on foot successfully; why not then an evil purpose in this plague of a Sahib, who gave him neither respite nor rest? Still he said nothing, surrounded as he was by incomprehensible ones, but merely spoke with his eyes of the things he would like to do when furtively glancing at Bolitho. As for the rest of the passengers, they rather pitied Bolitho for being compelled to run about the world with a sulky nawab.

In this way they came to Brindisi, thence overland to that gay city by the Seine called Paris. But in Bolitho's purpose there was to be no frivolity for His Highness the Nawab. On the contrary, he laid out a round of sedate visits to the Sorbonne, the Louvre, the Chamber of Deputies and such places as would tend to Bolitho's credit as a fashioner of model nawabs. No one will deny his was a laudable object, only it was unfortunate that while he was thus school-mastering his nawab on a tightrope, His Highness the Maharaja Jehandra—by the way, a neighbor of the Nawab of Godi—was figuratively kicking his slippers through the skylight of the fun loving capital under the "bear" leadership of a more indulgent and less ambitious politician. The Nawab heard of these things from his suite, groaned inwardly in jealous bitterness of spirit and was sure of the plot. Still he held his peace, since of what avail would it be to complain to this mad or murderous Sahib? So to London and the august festivities, through which the Nawab went with the spirit of an automaton. He didn't comprehend a third part of what was going on, and in that third there was no joy, since Bolitho checked

him in any attempt to, as one may say, cut loose from elevating restraint. But Bolitho was much pleased with India Office pats on the shoulder, relating to the excellent impression made by his nawab, and contrasting as it did with sundry awesome whispers of the Maharaja Jehandra's proceedings in Paris. By such means do men come to wear stars all over their breasts and rejoice in the big salaries of the Secretariat. At least so reasoned Bolitho. But the Nawab was thinking along far different lines, the principal aim of which was to rid himself of Bolitho at the first opportunity.

To this end he sent out his suite into the highways of London for information, and by the will of Allah they fell among some Americans, who told them surprising things of the freedom prevailing across the Atlantic. Could New York be gained, they declared the Nawab might laugh in the face of his political keeper, and kick his slippers just as high as Jehandra had been doing in Paris. This was news, indeed, and over it the Nawab pondered deeply, until his mind was made up to shake himself free of the accursed Bolitho in New York. Now behold the innocent way in which he set forth to trap Bolitho.

"By the favor of your God-forgiven intelligence," began the Nawab, gravely addressing Bolitho, "this journey has been a flood of knowledge sweeping into my brain. But as no man can eat of every dish without suffering indigestion, in this case some things remain stuck in the throat. While our learned *munsis* say the world is flat, you assert that it is round, declaring that proof of it would be made if we went on from this place across another black water, and so by other seas and lands came again to my own country, not once going backward. And that you say is the truth."

"A truth," replied Bolitho with superior indulgence, "which could be proved to Your Highness if we followed that route."

"*Wallah!*" exclaimed the Nawab. "Then that is what I would like to do, so that I may confound that old owl Fathullah, who talks without end about

things which have no other purpose than to bring forth yawns when the *diwan* meets."

This was a subtle thrust at Bolitho, but it glanced without dent from his armor of highly tempered self-opinion. Nevertheless the Nawab's suggestion of taking the westward course back to India via the United States appealed to him for two or three reasons. First, he thought it best to avoid the risk of another visit to Paris with his nawab in favor of what he understood to be the much safer atmosphere of American cities. Then he had been in correspondence with a Professor Jenks, of Gotham University. It had originated in a paper published by Bolitho in the *N. W. P. Gazette*, and developed the interesting question of substituting the Pragmatic Theory of Morals for the baser philosophy of the Koran in Mohammedan countries. Hence Bolitho's vanity was tickled at the prospect of producing a well trained nawab on principles of his own initiative. Then, somewhere, at a place called Staten Island, resided a sister whom he had not seen for many years. Therefore, on the whole, he was in favor of the United States route back to India, and obtained from the authorities the necessary *visé*. So he presently gathered up his nawab and stowed him away in a steamer bound across the Atlantic.

Here some days of unimportant things may be passed over, save that the Nawab displayed what Bolitho regarded as a remarkably tractable disposition, yielding his own preference to every suggestion, and apparently evincing a keen interest in his course of uplift training. Clearly the tightrope was the right hold to lay upon a nawab. He did not observe the glitter in the Nawab's dark eyes as each day brought the vessel nearer to the Land of Freedom, or hear the guttural talk which went on in the Nawab's stateroom when he had retired to smoke in perfect serenity of well doing. If he had, then this story would not have been written. What the Nawab thought of New York on landing is set down elsewhere, being trite remarks previously pumped into him by Bolitho and of no consequence. Followed then

the establishment of His Highness and suite at the Grand Monumental Hotel, an early call by Professor Jenks and an improving plan sketched out for the New York visit. As Bolitho was eager to see his relative, the Professor courteously but rashly offered to take temporary care of the Nawab. He proposed to call for the Nawab in an automobile, and give him the benefit of inspecting a long string of public institutions, to be wound up with a reception at the Professor's—tea, ice cream, assorted sandwiches and complimentary talk. It was all very nice, and as the Nawab expressed his approval, Bolitho purchased a pocket map of Staten Island.

Hence next morning Bolitho took an early ferryboat, and an hour or so later the Professor called for the Nawab. A genial smile lit up the Professor's face as his dark-skinned guest climbed into the car, for, after all, Mohammedan princes are somewhat of a rarity in New York, and he anticipated considerable satisfaction later in presenting the Gotham faculty to His Highness. The Metropolitan Museum was to be the first stop, but on the way it occurred to the Professor that His Highness might be interested in seeing the zoo. His Highness was interested, particularly in a critical inspection of the occupants of the lion house. Presently he turned to the Professor.

"*Wahl Wahl* This is more than was to be expected. What I would like would be a grand *shikar*. We will sit on top of one of these houses and have the lions and tigers, which are in good condition, driven past. Then, O Professor Sahib, we will decide which of us two is the better shot!"

The smile which had beamed on the Professor's features expressing his interest in the primitive delight of an undeveloped mind suddenly went out, and a shadow of consternation took its place. He hastened to explain that the animals were not for hunting purposes, but kept for the instruction and entertainment of the people. If this was made clear—a subject of doubt—the frown of disappointment which gathered on His Highness's brow warned the Professor that

it was best to depart from those precincts expeditiously, and avoid places where the hereditary savage instinct might be kindled into flame. Thus the day's record held but one or two disquieting incidents. For example, at the Collegiate Club, where the Professor took His Highness to lunch, the sedate atmosphere of that scholastic resort was rather startled by the Nawab calling for a king's drink, India fashion—a highball of brandy and champagne. Also, at the Professor's reception, His Highness astonished a lady of personal attractions by offering to make her his third wife if her husband could be removed with dispatch. It was possibly intended for a compliment, but the lady professed to hate the Nawab. Who knows but that the sting of it may have lain in the numeral three as applied to His Highness's proposal? But the Professor's diplomacy smoothed over these matters, and on the whole it was with satisfaction he landed the Nawab safely back at the Grand Monumental as darkness was closing in. Bolitho had returned from Staten Island, and was waiting in the main corridor when the Professor advanced to deliver up his charge.

"I think," said the Professor, "His Highness will admit having received some distinct impressions of ultimate value to carry back to India."

Bolitho glanced quickly from the Professor to the Nawab and seemed puzzled.

"Did you—er—leave His Highness somewhere?" he asked.

"Leave His Highness somewhere?" repeated the Professor, equally mystified. "Why, no; he is here."

Bolitho turned a penetrating look on the stolid figure standing beside the Professor and spoke a few words in an Oriental tongue. Whatever the response was, it did not seem to be enlightening.

"There must have been a mistake of some kind," remarked Bolitho. "This man is not the Nawab, but his slipper bearer."

"His slipper bearer!" ejaculated the Professor. "Good heavens! How—"

"I don't know how, except that this man says he was obeying the Nawab's

orders," returned Bolitho. "Didn't you notice the difference?"

"Why, now you call my attention to it, I seem to do so," replied the Professor. "But I had previously only seen His Highness for a few minutes, and I must say the Nawab and this other fellow present a remarkably similar appearance."

Which was the truth since, granted likeness of features and complexion, it is also the custom for an Indian prince's household to compliment their sovereign by striving to emulate him in mannerisms and appearance. Thus in the fiercely brushed-up whiskers and the Nawab's particular swagger, it might have been difficult for a casual observer to distinguish between the Nawab and his slipper bearer, particularly in Occidental costume.

"I—er—really scarcely know what to make of it," said Bolitho.

"It is certainly a strange mistake," added the Professor, who began to foresee consequences if it should become known that he had been playing lion with a mere slipper bearer in place of a nawab. It would be hard to make people understand that a slipper bearer in India is sometimes very close to the throne, and many of the reigning families come from a far lower stratum.

Bolitho again tried unsuccessfully to extract information from the impenetrable slipper bearer, then went up to the Nawab's apartment but returned with a serious face.

"His Highness is not there," he confided to the Professor. "I wonder what on earth has become of him? He has—ah—never before behaved like this. It is most inexplicable."

As a mystery the Nawab's disappearance grew deeper with advancing hours. But late in the evening an ominous whisper floated into the lobby of the Grand Monumental. It appeared that a wealthy foreigner of Oriental mien had been making himself unduly conspicuous after the fashion of his own land at a nearby theater. The Professor learned that the attraction provided was of a volatile opera caliber, and carried the news to Bolitho.

"I wonder," he suggested, "if he could possibly be our distinguished visitor?"

Bolitho did not indulge in speculation, for he was gripped with a sudden alarm. He begged the Professor to lead on swiftly to the theater. "You never can tell what these confounded people may be up to," he remarked grimly, "though I certainly imagined I had the Nawab well under control."

At the theater one of the staff readily identified the missing Nawab.

"Oh, yes," he nodded. "Your man took a box and started in by throwing five-dollar gold pieces to the chorus. He wanted to fill our star's mouth full of 'em. When we remonstrated, he said he was a king, and offered to buy all the chorus girls on the spot. As he continued to make trouble, we had to request him to leave. His friend the Colonel managed to get him out of the house by saying there were much finer dancing girls somewhere else. That was a lie, of course."

"His friend the Colonel?" questioned Bolitho with a puzzled look.

"H'm—yes. I guess some fellow that picked your king up, and is now towing him around town at a considerable profit."

A grave expression settled on the Professor's face. Bolitho was plainly worried.

"Have you any idea where they have gone?" asked the Professor.

The theater man offered several likely suggestions, remarking that a nawab scattering gold coin up and down Broadway should not be difficult to find. So the Professor and Bolitho climbed into a taxi, and took up the Nawab's hilarity-blazed trail. It led to several places strange to the Professor, for the most part bathed in a great brilliancy of electric light and replete with excessive mirth. That the Nawab was desirous of making a royal impression was evident, but this also must be said for the Colonel—that he seemed to possess a positive genius in extricating the Nawab from difficulties, and somehow managed to keep about half an hour ahead of the chase. Under other circumstances the

Professor might have regarded the trip as an instructive sociological study, but the hot wrath of his companion kept but a single desperate end in view.

"When I put my hand on him again," shot from between Bolitho's clenched teeth, "I'll make him remember this night! I consider His Highness's behavior simply scandalous!"

"Exactly!" agreed the Professor. "But at present it looks to me as if this Colonel had got hold of—what was the peculiar expression you used? Oh, yes, his 'bear rope.'"

Sometime in the early hours of morning the Nawab was definitely located in one of the big hostleries. As became his dignity, he had engaged an expensive suite, and thither had promptly migrated his piratical-looking followers. But when Bolitho tossed his card on the desk with a demand to be shown up to the Nawab's rooms immediately, it was to meet with an unexpected rebuff.

"The Nawab left instructions," announced the clerk, "that all communications with him must be made through his secretary, Colonel Barker."

"His secretary, Colonel Barker! Bosh!" snorted Bolitho. "Inform the Nawab I'm here. That's enough!"

But the clerk held to his orders.

"I'm sorry," he said. "All I can do is to send your card up to Colonel Barker."

It was here the diplomacy of the Professor began to manifest itself.

"I think we'd better see this Colonel," he advised. "It's just as well to find out what kind of a man has got hold of your Nawab's bear rope. It won't do to try and force matters—at least not yet."

So the card was sent up, and a message returned that the Colonel would be down presently. It was hard for the autocratic ruler of a king to cool his impetuous heels in the hotel lobby, and more difficult still to restrain indignation when confronted by the smooth, somewhat too well dressed and rather over-jeweled individual who introduced himself as Colonel Barker.

"Well, gentlemen," he greeted blandly. "What can I do for you?"

"Take us up to the Nawab of Godi's

apartment at once," returned Bolitho tersely.

"Regret that can't be done," responded Barker. "Nabob's gone to roost after quite an exciting evening. He has got to rest up now to carry out the program I've sketched for tomorrow."

"What do you mean by that?" demanded Bolitho.

"Mean—oh, merely since His Highness has commissioned me to provide him with a good time in New York, why, I'm going to see he gets it."

"Oh, indeed! Now, my good fellow," went on Bolitho loftily, "I want you to understand that His Highness is entirely in my charge, and I must ask you to refrain from making any arrangements on his behalf."

Barker chuckled.

"Guess the Nabob can do as he likes here so long as he keeps inside the law," he answered. "If he wants me to take him to the baseball game tomorrow, I don't see that he has to ask anyone's permission."

"I absolutely prohibit it!" Bolitho flung an ultimatum at Barker.

"You do, eh?" retorted the other. "Then I guess you can keep on prohibiting. No crime here for a nawab to cut loose at baseball."

Bolitho took a step forward, and both men glared at each other. But the Professor hastily interposed to prevent an unseemly wrangle—perhaps worse. He smoothed Barker's ruffled feelings by assuring him there could be no objection to the Nawab witnessing the national game, and that he felt sure His Highness was in good hands to enjoy a well earned vacation in New York from the troubles of state. He said he would call on Barker to talk over further plans, and drew Bolitho aside.

"The situation is unfortunately quite simple," he summed up in conclusion. "This Colonel, who is of course an adventurer, has managed to get hold of your Nawab's bear rope. All we can do is to watch for the chance to snatch it out of his hand. To attempt any other course would bring a swarm of reporters down on us, and—"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the distressed Bolitho. "I'm afraid the India Office would regard that as extremely annoying. I should get an awful wiggling. I really must depend on you to help me out of this scrape."

"Well, then, we must appear to be in entire accord with this Barker fellow," said the Professor, "and wait for the opportunity to regain possession of your charge. For his own sake Barker will probably not allow the Nawab to exhibit himself too outrageously. Most likely he will strive to keep him under cover."

Very faithfully the Professor stood by his task, but felt bound to admit little progress made during the next few days in recapturing the Nawab. Meanwhile the latter appeared to enjoy his freedom hugely, for although Barker never let the prize out of his grip, he permitted His Highness to run easily at the end of the rope. Therefore the Nawab was quite happy. But a cable from the India Office, wanting to know when the party expected to return to Godi, drove Bolitho to desperation. Something decisive must be done to regain control over the Nawab, but Bolitho was at a loss to perceive any means. It was the Professor who suggested a conference with Barker, taking it upon himself to negotiate for the surrender of the bear rope attached to the Nawab.

"Now, Colonel," began the Professor, "my friend, Mr. Bolitho, feels grateful to you for shouldering all the trouble of entertaining the Nawab in New York, but it is now time for him to return to Godi."

"Why?" replied Barker. "The Nabob says he's content to stay right here in New York. He's having the time of his life, and doesn't want to go back to Godi."

"Very likely not," agreed the Professor. "But I presume you would hardly advise him to remain in New York without money. You see, he will soon exhaust what cash he has, and no more will be forthcoming unless he returns to Godi."

"Oh well"—Barker jerked his head confidently—"the Nabob tells me he has treasure chests piled full of gold and



jewels. As he's offered me the position of commander-in-chief of his army, guess I'll go along."

This development was unexpected by the Professor. He coughed reflectively and pondered some moments before proceeding.

"I presume," he remarked presently, "you are informed regarding the conditions of life in Godi?"

"Haven't thought much about them," Barker returned with unconcern. His mind was entirely on the treasure chests.

"No—well, they are hardly what one would term desirable. I understand," the Professor went on in his calm lecture voice, "that—er—cobras, cholera and crocodiles are its principal features of interest. The species of poisonous insects are, I believe, extremely numerous, while tigers, panthers and so forth abound in the surrounding jungles. A white man seldom lasts more than six months in Godi, for if he escapes natural dangers the natives are very treacherous."

Barker did not respond, but the Professor, on lifting his eyes, observed that his description of Godi had not failed in making an impression.

"Personally," he continued, "I would much prefer New York, particularly with a little money. Now, Colonel, in order to hasten the return of the Nawab to Godi, Mr. Bolitho is willing to pay five hundred dollars for your trouble and expense in entertaining His Highness."

"You mean handing him back to you," nodded Barker shrewdly. "Make it five thousand, and I'll concede the treasure chests."

"Too much," said the Professor. "Neither Mr. Bolitho nor myself feels any interest in the Nawab's treasure chests."

"Too little," retorted Barker, "considering I hold the Nawab."

He plainly intimated he thought the Professor was bluffing about the treasure chests.

Followed then a long discussion over terms. Finally Barker decided to take a night to think over the Professor's ultimate offer. He promised to give an

answer in the morning. Bolitho and the Professor were awaiting Barker, when he burst in upon them in great excitement.

"Hello!" he cried. "Say, what do you think has happened? The Nawab and all his crowd have skipped—gone right off!"

"In heaven's name, where?" questioned Bolitho.

"Who's got hold of the rope now?" added the Professor.

"Gone!" Barker almost wept with disappointment. "I must have given it away that I was thinking about selling out my interest in him to you people. He didn't show any suspicion, the ungrateful rascal, but promised me handfuls of gold if I would go with him to Godi. Then he and his crowd slipped out. I guess I must have been given something in my coffee, for when I woke they had all gone off to Europe by the midnight boat."

"What!" gasped the bewildered Bolitho.

"Picked up the end of the rope himself. Well, well!" ejaculated the Professor.

"Gone sure enough," said Barker. "I got proof of that down at the dock."

"I must follow him by the next steamer," promptly decided Bolitho.

"But what beats me," added Barker, producing a passenger list, "is why he booked under your name for Paris."

"Under my name!" exclaimed Bolitho in supreme astonishment. "Surely he has not had the audacity to—"

"He certainly has," Barker pointed to the sailing list. "There it is—Mr. Grimstone-Bolitho and Party,' with the hyphen in between all correct."

Words failed Bolitho, for the prospect of the Nawab romping around Paris under his name before being recaptured was appalling. It was a true touch of Oriental vengeance, which might take Bolitho a lifetime to explain and live down. If the iniquity of that thing can be surpassed, let any man talk it over with Bolitho.

As to the Professor, he preserved the great wisdom of silence.

# FROM THE JOURNAL OF MADAME LÉANDRE

By Helen Woljeska

**W**OMEN are sphinxes—but unable to solve their own riddles.

Love is the most popular of thoroughfares from Heaven to Hell.

Nothing makes woman as gay—as grief.

To equalize things, every good woman adds to her neighbor's age the years she subtracts from her own.

Sometimes it is easier to forgive a swordthrust than a needleprick.

The black velvet "*yeux de Venise*" no longer form part of the fashionable woman's wardrobe. Still—you cannot find a woman who does not wear a mask for her lover.



## CONVERSION

By Aloysius Coll

**O**NE was a pillar of carven stone;  
One was a vessel of clay;  
One bore the weight of a god alone,  
And one a rose of May.

A woman came to the god in tears;  
She kissed the shaft of stone,  
And blew the sigh of heavy years  
On the rose the sun had blown.

Lo, where she wept, above the dust  
Of a god long overthrown,  
Today they show a woman's trust  
In a crimson rose of stone!



**W**HEN a man's wife tells him he talks in his sleep he begins to lie awake nights worrying.

# WHEN HIS PIPE WENT OUT

By Arthur Powell

THE boy stood at the street corner and carried a nasal, penetrating air while the girl, seated upon an old box, thrummed the zither and contributed an uncertain alto. There is something in the musical third, especially when vocally expressed, that touches the heart of the crowd and gives it pause at the edge of its most absorbing pursuits. At the conclusion of the song several coins jingled in the outstretched cap.

Moritz, clutching the baize bag and its precious contents tightly to his breast, could not be regarded as a typical unit of the throng in the street. Nor was his interest and theirs the same. The tones that vibrated in kindly kinship with their rough hearts fell upon his sensitive ears with a ferocity that made him shudder. It was not the performance but its result that fascinated him, that made him rebellious against things as they were. For his interest lay in the jingle of the coin. It affected him as the tinkle of ice in high glasses moves him whose dry tongue cleaves to a dusty palate. The boy who sang was but little younger than Moritz himself; his accompanist was no older, no more robust, than was Moritz's child wife, Lena. Lena—to think of Lena coming to that! And yet, if not that—what? He drew his free hand across a moist brow and pushed his way out of the crowd. Once free of it, the green bag was tucked tenderly beneath his arm, and he went on with unseeing eyes.

The thought of a bare room, an empty cupboard and—worst of all—of the patient spirit awaiting him there, centered in him an exquisite agony, increased by the growing conviction that no relief

was at hand. Then the scene he had just witnessed recurred to him as a temptation. Of a sudden desperation sprang full armed from the head of despair. He stopped, drew, with a hand that slightly trembled, an old violin from its baize casing, and allowed the bag to fall to the pavement. His upturned cap followed it, and a ray from the morning sun touched his mane of tawny hair in pitying benediction. He had played in many places that had brought the flush of shame to his clean young cheeks, but never yet in a public thoroughfare for such pennies as the charity of the bystander might bestow. And yet, if it meant dinner for Lena, who had had no breakfast, why not? All hesitation gone, he tried the tuning of his strings, gave the pegs a twist or two, and, bringing the instrument into position, began to play.

As Moritz played on with half-closed eyes, he forgot everything else but the music. So, too, did many of those who heard the sweet, long drawn call of his vibrant bow.

When he came back to everyday consciousness it was to hear the clink of coin in the cap at his feet. A strong hand fell upon his shoulder. With a sudden fear of having offended against some unknown law, Moritz looked up, full into the face of a man with gleaming eyes and teeth and a little pointed golden beard.

"Bravo!" this dazzling incarnation of the joy of life was saying. "Bravo! I want you. Pick up your cap and come with me."

Still a little dazed, Moritz obeyed, following the well tailored shoulders as they masterfully opened a way through the crowd. Then Golden Beard set a

brisk pace, talking volubly as they strode along. Sympathetic questioning drew from Moritz many of the facts of his hard struggle since leaving the Fatherland, and before he had realized the passage of time they were in an elevator, gliding upward past floor after floor of a great modern building. They stepped out at the top story. Golden Beard fitted a latchkey to the lock of a door—and Moritz stepped into a strange, new world. In a large, skylighted apartment were scores of canvases glowing with the fresh tints of spring foliage and clear skies, glimmering with the darker beauties of rich interiors or gleaming with the ripple of waves beneath a languorous moon. Many canvases were veiled with cloths or turned toward the wall, piquing curiosity and setting desire tingling in the blood. Stands of armor, Oriental rugs, lay figures, easels, pedestals and statuettes were disposed in tumultuous array about the room, while a not unpleasant smell of oils pervaded the air. A dais stood directly beneath the skylight, just where the light could best be manipulated to fall upon it from any angle.

Golden Beard pushed an easel into position, put a clean canvas upon it and selected a piece of crayon. Swept along on the current of the man's unbounded, good-natured vitality, Moritz found himself standing upon the dais, his violin at his chin, the bow poised above the strings. But he was not to play—no! Only to take, and to hold, this position while the artist's skilled fingers sent the crayon flying over the canvas in time to his voluble explanations.

"I hear a singing sound, half human, half divine," he chattered on, his fingers scarcely pausing in their flight over the white ground. "I turn the corner, and come upon—what? Nothing less than—my new picture! A youth, head of the leonine type, eyes half-closed, a flood of light picking out the sweet, firm lines of the mouth and throwing about the head and shoulders an aura of gold—resting too, upon a strong, white wrist as it flexed to the sweep of the bow. Even the varnish of the violin seemed saturated with the sunshine, and the yellow of the

hair melted into a background of golden haze. It was not a natural phenomenon—rather a vision sustained upon the melody drawn from the violin, fated to vanish at the final sweep of the bow. The whole perfect picture, in short, seemed to express—what? In a flash the answer came to me—'The Soul of Sound.' Thus did Guilbert find his subject; thus did he find *you!*

"The wrist a little higher, please—that's it. Don't move a muscle! Tired? Cheer up, it will soon be over."

But when at last Guilbert declared the sitting at an end, the long hand of the clock had described a perfect circle about its axis, and Moritz, unsustained by breakfast, was ready to faint with exhaustion.

"Here," the artist was saying, as he fumbled with a refractory pocketbook—"here is what you have earned this morning. I shall want you again tomorrow," and he passed into Moritz's hand a dollar bill.

Moritz tried to stammer bewildered thanks. A dollar for standing still for an hour, and another tomorrow for the same peculiar service! It was incredible. His mind was already busy with the momentous question of beef or veal, when the artist's command made him pause upon the threshold.

"Wait!" Guilbert pondered a half-minute. Then he impetuously flung up a detaining hand, seated himself at a small table and penned a letter. His energetic strokes soon made an end of the work. The sheet was folded, placed in an envelope and the envelope addressed.

"There!" he said, handing the envelope to Moritz. "I'm not much of a judge of music. I know what gets me—that's all. But I'm going to take a chance of offending an erratic friend. I'm going to send you to a man who knows music as I know color. Take this note to the address on the envelope at—well, better say four o'clock this afternoon. You'll be most likely to find him then. But mind—don't build any hopes upon this interview. If the Master should take you up, your fortune would be made. On the other hand"—he chuckled—"you may be lucky to get

into the house and out of it again without personal injury. Unless you have unbounded confidence in your own ability and courage enough to face a bear in his pit—stay home! That's all. Don't forget tomorrow!"

Moritz, having no experience of the ways of elevators, walked down six flights of stairs and, standing for a moment in the vestibule to get his breath and steady his trembling legs, glanced at the envelope in his hand. The blood seemed to pause in his veins for the fraction of a second; then it rushed on again at the double quick to the drumming of his heart. For the name upon the envelope was one that he had often breathed from awed lips, a name that all the world accepted unquestioningly as that of a Master indeed. He pushed two fingers tentatively into his coat pocket to make sure that no hole gaped at the bottom, then reverently placed the letter there, half afraid to loose his grasp upon it lest he lose it, yet hesitating to carry it in his hand for the same reason.

His thoughts reverting to the dollar bill and to Lena, he stepped forth in search of a market where solid meat and wholesome bread might be obtained at the least possible expenditure. Soon a familiar sound reached his ear. It was that of two shrill young voices lifted in some banal song, and before long the twang of the zither could be heard. Moritz flushed in shame as he thought of the coins in his trousers pocket. He could never confess to Lena that he had played his violin upon the street corner. Perhaps the little equivocation ahead of him would be easier if—He elbowed his way through the knot of listeners, took the coins from his pocket and threw them all into the outstretched cap. With somewhat lightened conscience he hurried on.

There was no elevator in the dark and dusty tenements over which Moritz and Lena lived, and it was a very weary youth that made his way upstairs through the domains of the wild-eyed, ragged-bearded men and their stoic women with the eternal burden at their breasts. How Lena shrank from the unseeing glare of their eyes and from the

undisguised filth of their clothing and their surroundings! She could not bring herself to look upon them as other than animals—strange dogs which one might pity but which one feared to trust. Yet they were not so much brutal as primeval, being absorbed in first things—in hunger and its satisfaction, in weariness and rest.

As Moritz, weak but elated, staggered through the doorway, a slight, girlish figure threw itself eagerly upon him and embraced him, violin, packages and all. Then a tiny fire was kindled with the last coals from a soap box by the stove, and Lena bustled about in a very housewifely manner while Moritz told the wonderful story of his morning—modifying it only to avoid confessing the weakness that had led him to play for coppers in the street.

As he chattered excitedly on, the ray of sunlight that had glorified him at the street corner seemed to have followed him into the bare garret room. Its one window was curtainless, but the gleam of the polished panes was like a brave smile in the face of desolation. When at last he came to the letter and, taking the precious envelope from his pocket, once more spelled out the superscription as Lena hung upon his shoulder, the fire in the little stove roared away in a canzonet expressive of hardships past, warm, full fed satisfaction in the present and positive victories for the time to come.

"For the Master, Lena," said Moritz, in the tone of one praying softly, "he, too, comes from the Fatherland!"

So the adventures of Moritz were recounted until the meal was ready; were discussed with the meal; were lived over again as the two made their simple preparations for the afternoon call; and interest in the narrative was still far from exhausted when they found themselves climbing the stone steps that led to Number 417.

It was a dark, heavy, forbidding door, that door before which stood young Moritz and his child wife Lena. The green-sheathed violin was held lovingly beneath his left arm, while his right hand, having disengaged itself long enough to use the knocker, sought again

the trembling fingers of the girl at his side. To you and me it would have seemed but the old and ugly entrance to an old and ugly house. To them it was the gateway of a vague but glorious future.

The great door swung cautiously back, and there appeared a sour-visaged dame whose age and apparel were in keeping with her master's domicile. At her harsh question as to what they wanted Lena held back in fear, but Moritz, as became the protector of helpless femininity, took the cap from his yellow locks and bravely delivered his precious mis-sive.

Grudgingly the woman bade them step into the somber hall, and left them standing there while she took the note in to the ogre of the castle. After a time she reappeared and, beckoning them to follow her, ushered them into a huge apartment whose most conspicuous piece of furniture was a grand piano. It was comparatively light here, and at a table, scribbling away at a manuscript, sat the dreaded Master himself. He half turned toward them with uplifted pen. His stern, rugged features sent a chill rippling along poor Lena's spine, and even the lion-hearted Moritz felt the awe that pervaded his presence.

"H'm! So you are"—he rummaged among the papers with his free hand, found the letter, scanned it hastily and impatiently—"you are Moritz Michaelovitch?"

"Yes, Master."

"And who is this girl—your sister?"

"My wife Lena, Master."

"Your wife—bahl! How long since marrying and giving in marriage was practised among babes? What can Guilbert be thinking of—is he laboring under the delusion that I keep an orphan asylum? Well, sir, are you speechless? What do you do—scrape the violin? Then, since Guilbert importunes me, I suppose I must endure it. A plague on Guilbert and his fiddlers! Stand over there—as far away as you can get. Play and have it over with!" And he went back to his scribbling.

"Courage, Lena!" whispered Moritz, although the reception had shaken his

own fortitude. "Courage, and give me the A!"

Trembling, she seated herself at the great piano, and gave him the note. His strong young fingers worked over the pegs and strings until everything was to his satisfaction.

"Now play the 'Amoroso,'" he murmured, "and forget the Master—think only of the music and of me!"

His confident air steadied her nerves. She struck the opening chords. His bow touched the rosined strings, and the mellow tones floated out into the room.

Once well started, his love of the violin triumphed over his embarrassment. His soul went into every sweep of his arm, and he cozened from the instrument the fine gradations of his own feeling. The golden notes seemed to fill the air with a subdued sunshine.

As the piece progressed the Master's pen faltered, and at last it was laid down. Picking up in its stead a long-stemmed pipe with a huge bowl, the impresario deliberately filled and lighted it, and proceeded to puff out great clouds in evident satisfaction.

Poor Lena, coughing a little from the smoke, pluckily stuck to her accompaniment, and Moritz, surmounting all difficulties with apparent ease, brought the selection to a triumphant conclusion.

With the ending of their task much of the dignity and power it had conferred upon them left them, and they waited, two rather forlorn little figures, for the Master to speak.

"Well," he rasped out between the audible puffs of his pipe, "is that the only thing you know? Can you play nothing else?"

Moritz pulled himself together, spoke in a low tone to Lena and resumed the playing position.

Lena struck a few chords like the ripple of waves at the dawning, and the violin came in with the plaint of sea-birds on the wing. The sun mounted into the morning skies, a village awoke to the life of a new day, and somehow two lovers strolled into the story. Not in all the annals of love and poesy was there anything brighter or purer than the springtime ardor of that passion.

It created for them new heavens and a new earth. To the old man sitting there with his pipe between his teeth the music was as the flying carpet of the Arabian Nights, carrying him back to youth and Fatherland. Years of toil and bitter disappointment fell away. Even his final conquest was forgotten, and he was a youth again, walking for the time among the scenery and the gods of Olympus and finding heaven in the trustful gaze of a maiden's eyes.

He ceased to puff at his pipe, holding it forgetfully in his fingers.

The music changed—subtly, but none the less a change. A new element had entered into it. Dawn had receded before early morning; morning was burning away almost imperceptibly into brazen noon. The flutings of birds, the pipings of shepherds merged into a distant but approaching sound—the call of an imperious horn. Peace was disturbed by what was at first only a rumor, then impending disaster, then a present war! With the trumpet call and the rumble of distant conflict in their ears, two lovers made their agonized farewells.

The Master's throat was rigid; he had ceased to puff at his pipe. He recovered himself with an effort, and the fumes poured forth again.

In a village by the sea a girl had suddenly become a lonely, weeping woman. The story left her there, and followed its hero into the crash of conflict. Not all the screaming hags that ride on the back of the storm could rival that hell of deafening horror that formed the vortex of the struggle. A flag saved—a man gone forever—a battle lost and won!

Little by little sound ebbed away into a silence that was more pregnant and impressive than the thunder roll it displaced. Day faded out into the west; night crept stealthily out upon the field, shrouding its scene of horror. Then the moon, pale and frightened, rose and leaned above the carnage. There, among a heap of dead, a youth raised himself upon his elbow in a last painful effort. He was listening, and one heard with him the plaint of waves washing a rocky shore, with the indescribable, creaking

cry of the seabirds as they wheeled above the cold waters. Then every sound died away in a sob.

Lena, in utter exhaustion, let her head droop forward upon her hands. Moritz stood wiping the perspiration from his brow. The Master sat staring into nothingness, the stern lines of his face accentuated.

Soon he stirred. His rough tones broke the spell.

"What composition is that? I do not know it."

"I—I call it 'The Fatherland,'" Moritz stammered.

"You call it—" A note of exasperation crept into the impatient voice. "And what does the man who wrote it call it?"

Moritz looked blushing down at his feet, and dug one toe into the carpet.

"It—it is mine, sir," he faltered.

"Ugh!" grunted the Master—and the exclamation might have expressed disapproval or incredulity or any one of a dozen emotions. He reached out to an old-fashioned bellrope and gave it a jerk. The ancient dame appeared in answer to the summons.

"Show these children out," he commanded.

The tears welled up into Lena's eyes as she and Moritz went toward the door. So this was the end of their fine dreams, their golden hopes, their castles in the air!

But Moritz kept the tail of his eye on the Master as if expectant of something. The old martinet placed his pipe to his lips, pulled viciously, took it away again, gazed into its dark bowl with an intense disgust and threw it aside.

Moritz and Lena had reached the door, but turned at the sound of the raucous voice.

"You will come again tomorrow at the same time," it rasped.

"Thank you, Master," cried Moritz, his eyes kindling. Demurely he led Lena out into the hall, through the forbidding portal and down the stone steps.

No sooner had the door closed behind them, however, than he took Lena by both hands and forced her into a mad waltz over the pavements of the se-



cluded street. Not until she was breathless and hectic with the whirl did he cease to dance. Then he released one hand to tuck the beloved violin more securely beneath his arm, and exultantly cried:

"Did you see, Lena mine—did you see what happened?"

"What happened?" gasped Lena, winking back the tears. "I saw only a very wicked, bad-tempered old man, who tried so hard to hurt your feelings!"

"Bah!" cried the boy, flinging back

his tawny mane like a splendid young lion challenging the world to combat. "Bah! While you watched the man, I watched his pipe—his pipe, I tell you, my Lena. And listen! I had but one end in view—to make him forget to puff. Again and again I thought I had won, and again and again he roused himself in time to rekindle the dying spark. Even to the end I was not sure, until we reached the door. Then he put his pipe to his lips; he tried to puff. Oh, Lena mine, our fortune is made; his pipe—his pipe was out!"



## HER LAUGHTER

By Rachel Barton Butler

IN the dimple at her lips  
 Laughter makes a little lair,  
 Sallies out on saucy trips,  
 Quick, across her rosy lips,  
 Scampers to another dimple,  
 Lingers there.  
 But the lips disown the raider,  
 Pout and naughtily declare  
 Laughter has no welcome there.

Ah, but see the varlet slip  
 To her eyes and mock at me!  
 My gaze lingers at the lip;  
 Who could think that aught would slip  
 From so sweet a resting place?  
 Witchery!  
 There's no laughter in her eyes.  
 In the dimple can it be?  
 No—where? Ah, then, warily!  
 If nor eyes nor mouth nor dimple  
 Holds sweet laughter, why, 'tis simple—  
 Don't I know? You can't fool me!  
 Laughter's in her heart, pardie!



**S**OME men have weak chins and some wear whiskers!

# THE SOUL OF THE POET

By Elizabeth Daly

THE *custode*, a big, good-looking young fellow, civil, but without a smile, opened the iron gate, and Clara stepped into the cool dusk of the cemetery. At first, coming in from the white hot noon, she got only an impression of green darkness, like light under sea; but the whole scene presently became distinct, and she stood just within the gate, after the *custode* had locked it and gone away, viewing it with emotion. She saw a grove of tall cypresses, set close, pointing motionless like little spires, and among them other gayer trees of a lighter green, whose leaves fluttered and whispered in some faint upper wind. A path sloped upward before her toward the high and ancient wall, and on either side of it rose dim, grayish urns and monuments surrounded by thickly growing shrubs. The silence and darkness impressed her deeply, coming as she had from blazing sunlight, heat and dust. The cemetery seemed to her like a walled sanctuary of twilight and peace.

A breeze touched her face; she caught the warm odors of mint and box and dry grass. Breathing deeply, she began slowly to mount the path. A leaf dropped at her feet, and she stopped and looked at it dreamily; a bird's thin note in the branches made her halt again and look up as if enchanted. Now turning to glance at some gray column and its inscription, now pausing to note the tremulous beauty of a willow drooping over a sunken grave, she climbed the little hill and finally reached the end of the walk. Facing the old wall, she stood irresolute, then turned to the left, where a group of trees and bushes overshadowed a white stone.

This grave, which was on a narrow ter-

race raised against the wall, attracted her eye, and she bent over it to read its legend. Having done so, she stood motionless. She had found what she had come to see.

A feeling of exaltation swept over her, and she felt her eyes fill with tears. She sat down on the edge of the terrace near the stone, observing mistily its whiteness, its simplicity, how the trees shaded and protected it, how a bush with delicate gray-green leaves hung over it so low that one of its branches trailed like a caress on the letters of the name. And as she rested there, her hand laid lightly on the marble, the full beauty of the place touched her with a sense of perfect rest.

Presently however, she was recalled from the reverie into which she had fallen by the sound of steps on the gravel. Someone was coming up the path—a man, walking slowly as though tired. She felt no irritation at seeing him, although she would have preferred certainly to be alone, nor was she aware of any embarrassment at being found here, an obvious pilgrim. Somehow, she had not expected to find any other worshippers, famous as was the shrine; but if there were others, it made no difference to her.

The newcomer came straight on, his bare head bent a little and his hands behind him. He was quite close to her before he saw her; he stopped, and they exchanged a direct look. He seemed young, but a little worn, ill, perhaps. His face had the expression of one who has anxieties, but his eyes were the quietest and most candid that she had ever seen.

What, she wondered, was the graceful

thing to do? Two people meeting at the same altar make no sign to each other, but at this altar the protection and barrier of formalism were absent. The newcomer stood before her at the foot of the grave, quite at ease. Conventionalities seemed absurd, and she said after a moment, casually, as though she were addressing a friend:

"I had no idea that anything was perfect in this world. Yet this," glancing about her, "is perfect."

"It is your first visit, then?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I had your feeling very strongly when I first came. It is a good deal to know that the place is like this."

"The surprise and joy were almost too much for me," Clara responded, smiling. "Always there has been something not quite right at the lovely places, but this—" She broke off, looking around her. "Perhaps the wall keeps it all out."

"Yes, it is safe here," he replied.

"And, best of all," she added, "one has a chance of being alone." Then, seeing him smile, she laughed frankly.

"I'll try not to spoil it," he retorted.

"You don't. I'm rather glad you did break the spell, a little."

"Why?" he asked, and then, glancing at the stone: "Does it make you unhappy?"

"It rather overwhelmed me."

"That all goes, you know," he said. "Nothing stays but a feeling of absolute rest. I call it natural balm."

"About him I always have that vague sense of personal loss," answered Clara. "It is stronger here, of course, than I ever felt it before. He seems so near. I feel as if he had died only yesterday."

There was a silence; then the other said quietly: "To me he never seems very far."

After a pause Clara continued, her eyes wandering over the shadowy slope before her: "Every leaf, every blade of grass here seems alive. It's very pagan, this place, isn't it?"

"Pagan in his sense, yes, but only, I think, because he is here."

"I can't imagine it without him," she said.

He stood looking down at the stone.

"One can't help wondering," he said after a time, "whether, if one had had the chance of knowing him, one would have chosen wisely—clung to him, I mean, against the world."

"It is strange to think how few did cling to him," she answered, "when one thinks how those few adored him. But as for doubting myself, that never occurred to me. I always feel that if he had cared, then it must have been just a question of the world well lost. And I'm not speaking of his love, you know—only his good will."

"Fortunate woman," he returned, "to be sure of yourself! I am a skeptic about my own possibilities. How do I know that I shouldn't have been blind to his motives—distrusted his sincerity—hated his surroundings—made any stupid human blunder? People are always making them, even nice people—like us," he finished, laughing.

"At least," she replied, "we shall never know the worst! But I shall always choose to believe that we should have chosen right; if there were any doubt of that we shouldn't be here now."

"I can only hope," he answered, smiling, "but your confidence is after his own heart."

She looked disturbed, and shook her head. "Don't say that, please. There is nothing about me after his own heart. It's sacrilege to say so."

"And you a lover of his?" he smiled incredulously. "And with courage sufficient to have followed him—"

"I have no courage at all," she answered. "I am afraid, after all, I was too sure of myself. Without courage—" She smiled rather pathetically up at him. "I'm afraid I oughtn't to be here."

"What? Not worthy?" he laughed, disdaining the suggestion. "You have the look of the disciple; I can see it in your eyes."

She was silent, her face downcast. Then she answered: "All theory with me. He would have despised me. I'm afraid of everything. I ought never to have come."

Gazing up at him sorrowfully, she was diverted from her own perplexity by the

haggard look of the face that returned her look so gently. With a sudden impatient impulse against the barriers that restrain civilized human beings from being of use to each other, she asked abruptly, "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Do for me? What sort of thing?" he asked, wondering.

"Oh, anything. I don't want to seem officious, but—you might pretend we were friends, if you should happen to want one."

"That's kind," he answered. "I'll take you at your word. But—I ought to make some return for so generous an offer. What can I do for you?"

There seemed a sort of irony in the question; she was so delicately lovely, so daintily clad, so evidently the recipient of exquisite care. But as he looked her face altered; a shadow crept into her eyes, the shadow of an old misery, haunting and somber. It gave him a shock of pity; she had seemed so far removed from trouble. "There is nothing you can do for me," she answered abruptly.

"Nothing?"

"Nothing." The tone was rather hard. Then rising and holding out her hand, she smiled at him. "Good-bye. It has been so pleasant, just as you said—natural balm. I have liked it all." Her eyes had recovered their serenity. "You'll remember what I said? I mean it. My name is Clara Vaughn, and you can find me at the Villa Giulia." Then she turned and left him, going rather swiftly down the path. He stood looking after her until he heard the iron gate creak and clash behind her; but he himself did not leave the cemetery for a long time.

A week later Clara Vaughn sat under the reading lamp in her sitting room at the Villa Giulia, brooding over her trouble, the American newspaper that she had not yet read open on her lap. Her eyes looked frightened and desperate, and her shoulders drooped a little, as if there were an invisible burden weighing upon them. She realized that every day now made a great difference in her mental condition; she saw nothing ahead of her but collapse.

She was, in fact, caught in the toils of  
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an enemy deadly and dangerous, one that she could not escape, could not fight, could not even find. It was an enemy no more tangible than slander—a venomous and all-pervading cloud of calumny that had surrounded her now for months, had driven her from America and followed her to England, and had found her out even here in Italy, where she had thought to retire in peace until the whole thing had disappeared and been forgotten. Italy, where she had meant to be strong and happy again, had become almost unbearable to her. She had had few visitors, and they had not been people she cared for; she reflected bitterly that not one of them had much to lose by association with a person who was "talked about." Her best friends were scattered and far away. Beside the fact that she shrank sensitively from testing any of them, they could do nothing for her except compromise themselves. She would not demand such a thing from those of them who were women, and the men were worse than useless.

She had left New York, impatiently trying to fling the annoyance behind her, as she had flung most of the other annoyances of her life, accompanied by a "companion," one Miss Mostyn of monumental respectability, who had been forced upon her by some perturbed and well meaning friends. Poor Clara, frozen in the "companionship" of this paragon, whose readiness to accompany her she had not at first understood, realized too late that her own situation was rather complicated than simplified by a factor of this sort; that if Miss Mostyn were not made comfortable, she might desert, and that if she did, the catastrophe would be in direct ratio to the splendor of her propriety. And it was not easy to keep Miss Mostyn comfortable, not easy at all. A lady of reduced gentility, who has kept a girls' school and has acquired the suspicious watchfulness and the more than conventional standards of conduct sometimes resulting from that trying occupation, is not the most genial of traveling companions to a charming young woman of generous impulses. Miss Mostyn knew,

moreover, all that there was to know of Clara's trouble, and had accepted the position that she now occupied not at all because she believed in Clara, but because she believed in the impregnability of her own reputation. She could watch, suspect, censure, and finally withdraw, but she no more feared sharing in any obloquy that had attached to Clara or might in future overwhelm her than if the latter had been one of her former pupils. Incidentally, she liked her comforts and the salary was large.

But her presence quite overcame poor Clara's spirit, and she chafed under it miserably in the intervals of her dull wondering as to the source of the scandal. There were stories; what they were, and whence they came, she could not discover. As is the case with most pretty women of impulse, she had done in her life foolish things—things that might even be twisted into scandals, if there were anyone diabolical enough to do the twisting. That there had been such people was plain, but it seemed impossible to find out who they were. Her husband, after their separation and before his death, would have had time to do any amount of harm, but then he had always, in spite of their differences, professed respect and fondness for her. The whole thing formed one of the social mysteries that one meets with so often among communities of indolent people who are fond of talking and have nothing to say.

"If I only didn't care!" she said to herself over and over. But she was of the sensitive temper that does care; and besides, as she realized more and more clearly, every real interest she had centered about the social life that might soon be hers no longer. She had liked heretofore to fancy herself apart a little from her world, partaking only superficially in its routine; she still thought that under other circumstances she might have had a very different career, but she saw and acknowledged that to tear herself away from it all now was to leave herself without any interest that deserved the name.

For a long time she had dreaded the

sight of a newspaper, especially an American newspaper, but she still took one, and always forced herself to read it. On her knees lay the one that had arrived in the morning. She lifted it and unfolded it slowly, because she did not dare refrain. Miss Mostyn, lustrously black as to hair and dress, sat on the opposite side of the table, reading and annotating with pencil notes a book on Italian frescoes. She carried at her side a black velvet silver-mounted bag which contained all her little *impedimenta*—pencil, knife, eyeglass case, handkerchief, paper cutter; and the frequent dull click that accompanied its opening or closing, as Miss Mostyn took out or put away some one of her belongings, had begun to rasp Clara's nerves. They were not steadied by the little article that she soon came upon in one of the society columns.

It was nothing more than a faint, baseless innuendo concerning this present European trip of hers; Clara, glancing toward her "companion," who was writing in her book with elaborate unconsciousness, wondered whether the obvious falseness of this particular suggestion would not convince the latter and, through her, others that all the rest was false as well. But Miss Mostyn's face was void of expression, and Clara, laying the paper aside, leaned back and clasped her hands behind her head with a sardonic smile. The sordid uselessness of the persecution struck her, and she suddenly laughed. Miss Mostyn looked up. There was not as a rule much laughter at the Villa Giulia.

Just then a sound of wheels on the drive and the stopping of some vehicle before the front door rather surprised them both. It was late, quite half past nine. The two women waited with some curiosity as a quick knocking was followed by a long pause and then by a sound of disputing voices. At last the footman came in and announced that a man wished to speak with his mistress. The expression on the servant's face showed the caller to be a person of no importance. Ushered in, the man proved to be genial looking and rather shabby, with a troubled and doubtful expression.

He spoke only Italian, to the regret of Miss Mostyn, whose knowledge of that language was purely academic, and of no use at all in conversation.

This was the Signora Vaughn? Well, the visitor was sorry to disturb her, but he had a lodger—name unintelligible, repeated efforts to pronounce it only ending in confusion for himself and mystification on the part of his audience. His lodger was an Englishman—yes, or an American, since the lady suggested it. This lodger, it seemed, was ill, very ill, and had been so for a week. He was quite unable to tell who his banker was or where he belonged or what was to be done with him. He had paid no rent for a fortnight; the week before his illness he had said something about remittances. But then gentlemen in difficulties always *did* speak of remittances. The landlord did not call himself a hard man; in fact he had a great affection for this particular lodger who was ill; but times were bad and he was poor. What could he do? Who would pay for medicines, food, all the thousand things the doctor might order? Could he even get a doctor for a charity patient? One or two had excused themselves already that evening—were too busy to come. And how could he, poor ignorant man, find his lodger's friends—if he *had* friends? So he had ventured to trouble the signora, in the hope that she would advise him.

He gave the impression of being furtive and more ill at ease than was quite natural, and Clara had looked and listened with a good deal of wonder. She now broke in on his rapid monologue to ask him what possible reason had prompted him to come to *her* in this difficulty; she did not remember ever having seen him before in her life. Her amazement grew as he bowed, glanced uneasily at the other lady and held toward her a dark green book, in which, to keep it open, he had inserted his thumb. Hesitating, she took it. It seemed to be a volume of poetry, and on the flyleaf someone had written in pencil: "Memo, in case I should want a friend; Clara Vaughn, at the Villa Giulia."

She read the words with a start,

then closed the book and laid it down softly.

"The Signora sees? I looked everywhere for some hint of his friends, his bankers, anything. And that book was lying on a table open, and I chanced to lift it, meaning to lay it aside." He was eager and almost joyful, now that she evidently meant to recognize the justice of his appeal to her. "Such a piece of good fortune!"

Clara did not reply. She was recalling the moment of caprice in which she had given the stranger her name, the moment in which he had probably written it down in this book. And suddenly at the memory of their meeting, her heart swelled. He *had* been ill, then, when he came so wearily up the path, and to think that, of the whole world, she alone, a casual, passing stranger, was able to help him!

She caught the black eyes of Miss Mostyn smoldering with repressed curiosity. Well, there was nothing questionable in visiting the sick, she hoped! Turning abruptly, she asked the landlord, "Is it far?"

"A mere twenty minutes."

"You have a carriage?"

He had.

Clara rose. "There is a friend of mine—an acquaintance, rather—very ill in the city," she said to Miss Mostyn. "They have no clue to any of his people, but luckily he had written my name in that book, where this man, his landlord, found it. I must go, I suppose—he ought to have a doctor and a nurse; a great many things are needed, I have no doubt." She hesitated an instant. "Will you come?"

Miss Mostyn glanced at the landlord. He looked very shabby and coarse, and his genial and hopeful smile was still a little furtive. Why furtive was plain enough to Clara; of course an Italian might feel it rather a delicate mission to call upon a lady—married, no doubt—in behalf of a gentleman who could not direct the expedition, nor point out pitfall and snare. It might have ended in trouble for the lady, trouble for the sick man, great trouble for the landlord. But Miss Mostyn did not understand

all that; she had not even comprehended what he said to Clara, and she saw only his expression.

"Dear me!" she said, with a note of chilly sympathy in her voice. "Who is the gentleman?"

Clara flushed a little, then smiled faintly. "I don't know," she said. "This man simply cannot pronounce his name intelligibly. But he had my name and address—and I can't refuse to go."

"Oh!" Miss Mostyn's look of interest became tinged with regretful indecision. "Forgive me, dear Mrs. Vaughn, but are you sure it is safe? Italy is so very—oughtn't you, couldn't you manage to get the name?"

But Clara knew the name would not help her. She smiled again and shook her head.

"I'm not afraid," she answered. "And I shall take Giuseppe on the box."

"Do forgive me." The other folded her hands pathetically. "I am so wretchedly timid, and you know that others depend on me—not to speak of the fact that I depend on myself." She was gracefully diffident. "You will realize how ill I can afford to take risks—and—could you find out from the man if it is anything contagious?"

Clara turned to the landlord with this very natural query, but he could offer no suggestion, and seemed frightened at the idea. He only knew that the lodger was unconscious and had been delirious. If they could find a doctor they could send him ahead of them; and the gracious signora need run no risks. Clara felt sorry for him.

"It is unfortunate for you," she said kindly, "but at least you need not be in distress about the money. I will be responsible for your rent and the other things, whether he lives or—" She suddenly straightened herself and turned back to Miss Mostyn with a beautiful flood of color. "You need not come," she said. "I don't mind going alone. Please don't wait up—I may be late. And I know you don't like the idea of staying here with only Maria; I'll send you back Giuseppe." Then, squarely turning her back on the whole fabric of propriety in the form of her disap-

proving "companion," and with a leaden sinking of the heart, she went upstairs. She had never been so frightened in her life, but the very extent of her fright had produced in her a sort of desperate recklessness. She had seen in Miss Mostyn's face the conviction that Clara had never wanted her to go, had known from the first she would not go, had been prepared, in case she offered to go, to make some sudden excuse and stay at home herself. And she actually felt, as she put on her hat and coat, as guilty and wretched as if the suspicion were true.

It was a long twenty minutes to the dingy street and the third-rate lodging house to which the landlord escorted Giuseppe and herself. Glad of her servant's company, she followed the guide up two flights of stairs and down a dimly lighted hall to an open door.

"The signor doctor!" murmured the landlord, relieved, as a thin, brown, kindly looking Italian advanced from the room to meet them. He greeted her with enthusiasm, but in a very low voice, and drew them all down the hall again till they were some distance from the door. There he explained the situation. It was typhoid, he said. The patient had been going about with it for a week, and had been in bed with it another; and now everything depended on instant care and nursing. Almost literally, there was not a moment to be lost.

"A hospital?" Clara asked. "I am prepared to pay for a room and the best care." The doctor shook his head.

"Impossible to move him now, signora. Perfect quiet, careful nursing—that is all we can do for him now."

"Then a nurse—"

"I will try to find one by the morning. The sisters are very busy, and I fear—" He paused. "Surely there will be someone in the morning. I must go away immediately myself—an urgent case some distance off."

"But it is horrible!" Clara could not bear the thought that such a crisis as this could come into the life of such a man, living in the world of today, among civilized people. To think of him, of anyone, lying helpless, unconscious,



abandoned to the mercy of a stranger! And she was that stranger, the only person who could help him. For she saw now that it was not only money that she must give him. When she had so lightly offered him "anything," and he had lightly recorded that offer, nothing had warned either of them that he was unconsciously to ask so much! He was the last man on earth, she guessed, who would have asked it of his own free will.

"I have done very little nursing," she remarked, removing her hat. "But I suppose, if you make the directions very clear, I shall be better than nobody."

"The signora will stay?" The doctor drew a quick breath.

"Of course I must stay; there is nothing else for me to do. But I can't help you about sending word to his friends, for I don't even know his name. I met him once, a short time ago. Giuseppe, you can go home now. Tell them I will come tomorrow!"

As she entered the sick man's room she suddenly realized that she was no longer frightened; she was conscious of a feeling of buoyancy and lightness that she could not at all understand. It puzzled her, all the while that the doctor was giving her her schedule for the night, arranging things for her as conveniently as possible, explaining, reiterating and making her repeat what he said. At last he was gone, and she was alone with the sick man and had begun her work, still with that curious feeling of freedom and joy, as if she were breathing mountain air.

Her patient, still though he was, sunk in a lethargy like sleep, his deeply lined, patient face with its closed eyes showing motionless against the pillow like an effigy on a tomb, needed undivided attention. At first the following to the letter of the little schedule, so short, so simple, so terrible in its demand for incessant watchfulness and unflinching care, kept her wide awake, every nerve keyed to its highest pitch. But as the half-hours dragged on, each punctuated by its wearing task, and the routine of her duties sank into her mind and her work grew more and more mechanical, the strain began to tell upon her. How

many hours more could she keep wide awake, with a clear mind? There was a margin left for personal judgment on that schedule; suppose she fell asleep watching him?

She studied him with awe as he lay there, so quiet, so passive, so far away, indifferent to his fate, waiting patiently for life or death. He seemed hardly animate, and made no sound. The weight of his utter helplessness began to drag upon her already tired nerves. She thought the half-hourly duties, those iron duties of the typhoid nurse, were what tortured her endurance; as a matter of fact, they were what kept her from collapse. The sense that she must keep watch on the passage of the moments was like a stimulant to her. Mere watching she could never have done, but she could work efficiently enough, although in a sort of dream.

It was after one o'clock, and her head felt rather confused; not as to her business—that was as clear to her as it had been hours before—but as to other extraneous things. She began to live over again, somewhere in the back of her head, her trials of the last few months; and gradually, as she realized again with a sort of joyful awakening that she suffered no longer, that since the first moments of her entry into the sick room her trouble had disappeared, she wondered vaguely why she had suffered at all. Dimly she began to see that she had been the slave of a thousand empty observances, and many more than a thousand unloved people; that it was those very people whose enmity she had been fearing; that she would never have had all the useless suffering of the past months if she had had some other interest apart from the ridiculous life that she had lived. If somewhere she had made for herself a place where she was necessary and useful and important, she would still have had a refuge, occupation, friends, champions. Calumny would not have annoyed her, perhaps could never have reached her.

An hour went by, and she was very tired, almost too tired to keep her eyes open. But her thoughts stung her, played on her nerves. She had been so

broken-spirited that she had humored Miss Mostyn, trembled at the arrival of newspapers, had almost, so low was she sunk, failed to respond to the message that this man had sent her. She had been on the point of offering the landlord money and sending him away—out of fear. The world had put her on her good behavior, and she had been trying sullenly to placate it.

Vague memories of her first meeting with the sick man came and confused themselves with the realities about her. She had had a strong feeling, while in the cemetery, of the near presence of him whose grave they had come to visit, and by some association of ideas she got the same impression now. She could almost see the poet, dead so long ago, sitting opposite her across the table, looking at her intently with the wild, ardent look that she knew had been his; the worn beauty of his face, its brilliant flush, the bright disorder of his hair, all struck her as touchingly familiar. She wondered if he could know that in this affair, slowly and tremulously as she had moved, she had followed him; that the memory of him had turned the scale, had made it impossible for her to refuse to do as she had done. He must know it! He did know it! He had understood so well that all of him would not die.

But this waking dream soon faded, and others, less coherent, came to take its place; by daybreak she was hardly conscious of what she was doing, of whether she was asleep or awake. When the doctor came at seven o'clock, bringing the nurse, she was standing exhausted at the foot of the bed, afraid to sit down lest she should fall asleep, and moving, when she did move, with the stiff deliberation of a somnambulist. They made her lie down on a couch, and there she fell into a profound sleep that lasted until sunset. "I was not quite in condition for night nursing," she explained apologetically to the doctor. Then, having assured herself that two nurses had been secured, and having arranged what supplies she herself was to send each day, and having interviewed the landlord, much to his satisfaction, she went home to the Villa Giulia.

Miss Mostyn met her on the steps, curiosity still smoldering in her black eyes.

"Dear me!" she remarked drily. "You look quite a ghost. I have been anxious about you. I could not understand Giuseppe at all."

"It was only typhoid," answered Clara reassuringly. She was still more or less in the hazy state of mind resulting from her long sleep.

"Indeed! And who was it, after all?"

"I don't know his name," answered Clara. "I had met him only once." She went past Miss Mostyn into the house, oblivious of the effect of her words. The night before, when her fear vanished, it had vanished forever; Miss Mostyn's opinion had suddenly become of no interest to her. Miss Mostyn became aware of this state of things almost as soon as Clara did, and decided on the spot that it was time for her to send the little note of resignation that was already written and lying in her desk, and in which she had based her decision on the score of ill health.

The note was delivered, and received by Mrs. Vaughn with the same tranquil preoccupation that had marked her behavior ever since her return from the city. She answered it with a pleasant word or two of regret and acquiescence; and somehow her manner conveyed to the other that she had anticipated, if not the resignation, at least their parting. The idea disconcerted Miss Mostyn; and for some reason, while she finished her packing and prepared herself for her homeward voyage, she began faintly to wish that the tone of her note had not been quite so peremptory and final. The doctor's calls at the villa with news of the patient, his reports of letters of credit and home addresses found after search, his earnest approbation of Mrs. Vaughn for her act of mercy, all seemed to put the incident in so different a light. It was hard, with the tone the doctor took, to maintain without loss of self-respect an attitude of suspicion, and Mrs. Vaughn was herself so different from what she had been before—she seemed very young, innocent, almost gay.

# THE LUCKIEST MAN

By Thomas Grant Springer and Edward Gage

## CHARACTERS

HOWARD WALCOTT  
HELEN WALCOTT (*his wife*)  
ROGER RIDGEWAY

PLACE: *A city apartment.*

TIME: *The present—early evening.*

**S**CENE—*Living room of Walcott's apartment. At the back is a door leading into the hall and others at the sides leading into the bedroom and the dining room. There is a desk, on which is a telephone, and a small table, at which sits HELEN WALCOTT reading. She is clad in a becoming house dress and has the air of being decidedly bored. As the curtain rises HOWARD WALCOTT appears in the doorway. He has on evening clothes but is in his shirt sleeves.*

HOWARD

Helen, where in Gehenna are my collar buttons?

HELEN (*looking up*)

Not being familiar with the geography of the place you mention, I'm afraid I can't inform you. (*She resumes her reading.*)

HOWARD

If you took a little more interest in your husband's effects it might change his expressions.

HELEN

And if you took a little more interest in the cause of your wife's indifference it might lessen the effect of her attitude toward your effects.

HOWARD

That is an answer that does not produce collar buttons!

HELEN

A little careful search in the upper right hand dresser drawer might.

(HOWARD goes out. HELEN resumes her book. HOWARD speaks unintelligibly off stage.)

HELEN (*looking up*)

What did you say?

HOWARD (*off*)

Nothing!

HELEN

Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you said, "Thank you."

HOWARD (*appearing in the doorway struggling with his collar*)

I don't relish sarcasm any too well.

HELEN

But I do politeness, and I see you found the buttons.

HOWARD (*trying to fasten the collar*)

Yes, but not the buttonhole.

HELEN

You can't accuse me of mislaying that. I see it is still in the collar.

HOWARD (*in desperation*)

Maybe you can see it is still in the collar but it doesn't feel still to me. Ah-h-h! (*He goes out.*)

HELEN

Your coat is hanging in the closet. I see you found the trowsers.

HOWARD (*off*)

Yes, and I am still wearing them, not you!

HELEN

Yes, you are.

HOWARD (*appearing again in the doorway*)

What?

HELEN

Wearing me out.

HOWARD

Wearing you out?

HELEN

Yes, wearing me out instead of taking me out.

HOWARD

Oh, that's it, is it?

HELEN

That is part of it.

HOWARD

See here, Helen, I can't be taking you out to a stag affair.

HELEN

It seems to me you are rounding up an awful herd of stags, and they must be running wild without does.

HOWARD

Now, Helen—

HELEN

It is not well for man to be alone—or woman, either.

HOWARD

But, my dear—

HELEN

Yes, this deer has been butted aside by the stags.

HOWARD

That is perfectly absurd. You know it is really business.

HELEN

Oh, yes, business is pleasure, and pleasure is business and none of my business. Go on; don't mind me.

HOWARD

Well, it doesn't seem to affect you much. Aren't you dining out, too?

HELEN

No, I'm dining at home.

HOWARD

When?

HELEN

When I get ready.

HOWARD

Alone?

HELEN

The fact that I dine alone is usually a matter of indifference to you. You seem to think that supplying the food ends your obligation. If I accept that view of it, I have only my own convenience to consult as to time, not yours.

HOWARD (*going out*)

Humph! (*Off*) Where is the clothes brush?

HELEN (*rising in exasperation*)

What you should have married was a valet instead of a wife. It would have been much more convenient and much less expensive.

HOWARD (*entering fully dressed*)

I'll find it myself. It isn't in there. There is never anything in its place. I'll bet it's in the dining room. (*He crosses the room.*)

HELEN (*stopping him excitedly*)

No, no, no, it isn't in there; it's—it's— (*She looks about.*) I'll get mine; wait a minute. (*She goes out hurriedly.*)

HOWARD

Now what's up? I'll bet it is in the dining room. (*He opens the dining room door, and starts back with an amazed whistle, then closes the door softly and goes back to the other side of the room shaking his head.*)

HELEN (*entering with a brush*)

Here, stand still till I brush you.

HOWARD

I'm sorry I have to go. Really, I don't want you to be lonesome.

HELEN

Never mind me; I won't be lonesome.

HOWARD

I'll try to get home early.

HELEN

No, I'll be very well alone. I have sewing to do.

HOWARD

You see, it is business. I expect to meet Hawksby, with whom I have that deal there. I can't get away before one. You really don't mind, do you?

HELEN

Of course not; attend to business first always.

HOWARD

That's right, dear. Will you please get my overcoat?

HELEN

Certainly. Do you want your crush hat? *(She goes out.)*

HOWARD

Please, dear.

*(He crosses swiftly to the desk, and taking a revolver from a pigeonhole, slips it into his pocket.)*

HELEN *(entering and helping him into his overcoat)*

There you are now, all ready.

HOWARD

Thanks, dear.

HELEN

You had better hurry; you are late now.

HOWARD *(consulting his watch)*

I should say I am. Now if you really don't mind, I think I'll stick it out.

HELEN

By all means.

HOWARD

You needn't wait up then; I won't be here till one at the very earliest. Good night.

HELEN

Good night. *(HOWARD goes out.)*  
And good riddance. He didn't even kiss me. *(A door slams outside. HELEN looks out the window, then crosses to the desk and takes up the telephone.)* Bank 682 . . . Yes, please. Thanks. . . . Hello, Mr. Ridgeway? . . . Yes, just gone. . . . Certainly, come right up. . . . No, no, we'll have dinner here. I gave Jane a night off. . . . Oh, you have the car? Certainly, if it will bring you any sooner, but I'm sure I won't change my mind. . . . Two minutes? All right, but don't break the speed laws. *(She hangs up the receiver, crosses the room, and opening the door of the dining room, drags in a table set for two, and arranges places and chairs. A bell rings off stage, and HELEN goes out, returning after a minute with ROGER.)*

HELEN

You certainly lost no time.

ROGER

How could I when I was coming to you?

HELEN

Are you sure the prospect of dinner didn't help you?

ROGER

How did I know I was to have the wonderful experience of dining quite alone with you?

HELEN

It is much more comfortable, not nearly so conspicuous and decidedly safer than dining out with you. Howard, for all his neglect, could be a perfect demon of jealousy, no matter how innocent the cause might be; and for all his studied politeness to you, your devotion to me has caused him some uneasiness.

ROGER

My dear Helen, he is only suffering from a guilty conscience. If he has potted love's sweetest rose and refused it sunshine, is it any wonder that the rose should turn to the little beam that steals in to seek her out?

HELEN

You should be a magazine writer, not a real estate agent.

ROGER

I'm trying to put a little fresh real estate into the rose's pot. Besides, you would make a poet of a plumber.

HELEN

I prefer to be a rose to you, not a drain. But talk sense now.

ROGER

For the nonce?

HELEN

That is a good start for your "sense."  
*(They approach the table.)*

ROGER

I see you haven't made a mess of it.

HELEN

Help!

ROGER *(seating himself)*  
With pleasure. To what?

HELEN *(seating herself)*  
Food, not a feast of wit.

ROGER *(pouring a glass of wine)*  
First let me propose a toast. Here's to the absentee; may he long be absent.

HELEN (*raising her glass*)

Here, here!

ROGER

You get me exactly. (*They drink.*)

HELEN

Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

ROGER

Of someone else?

HELEN

Sometimes.

ROGER

I thank you for the compliment.

HELEN

Rather thank me for the dinner.

ROGER

First for the compliment of your presence. You are a feast for the eyes.

HELEN

Some have eyes but see not.

ROGER

Then those who have theirs wide open profit by another's blindness.

HELEN

But seriously, Roger, it is dangerous for a man to leave his wife too much alone.

ROGER

If you were my wife, there would be no danger.

HELEN

Indeed!

ROGER

Because I would never leave you alone. Helen, how can you endure it?

HELEN

Because you help me.

ROGER

Then I do myself and you a grave injustice.

HELEN

How?

ROGER

By helping you to endure it.

HELEN

What do you mean?

ROGER

Something that has been on my mind for months. You are allowing yourself to wither from want of care. You need the sunshine of love, not the shadow of indifference. Let me uproot the rose and plant her in the sunshine.

HELEN

Roger!

ROGER

My car is waiting in the street. A little wrench at the roots and the rose is free. A loving gardener would carry her away, to plant her in a garden plot where it is always sunny.

HELEN

Roger, Roger, what are you saying?

ROGER

Nothing but what you already know. You know I have always loved you and cannot bear to see you unhappy. You are unhappy, are you not?

HELEN

Well—

ROGER

It is not well—it is ill; and it is making you ill. Let me be your doctor and prescribe for you. I propose a complete change of scene, new environments, new associations. I think perhaps a trip abroad—

HELEN

Roger, what are you proposing?

ROGER

I am proposing to you. The fact that I did not have first chance is not my fault. I am going to make my second win. Howard has had his chance and lost; it is only fair to give me mine.

HELEN

Yes, but how about the chance that I take?

ROGER

Can't you trust me?

HELEN

I wonder? I trusted one man.

ROGER

Are you going to judge all men by one?

HELEN

I think I had better reserve judgment until something occurs to prove that it is not misplaced.

ROGER

What do you want to happen to prove me?

HELEN

That is something I will have to leave to circumstances.

ROGER

Haven't you had enough of them now?

HELEN

Yes, I have had enough, but I do not

know how you would conduct yourself under fire.

ROGER

Only put me to the test, but put me soon. Don't you think that your own frying pan is getting hot?

HELEN

Yes, but not hot enough yet to make me jump into the fire. In the meantime, the soup is getting cold, so if you wish to be of immediate service to me, I am waiting.

ROGER

If that is a start, my cake is dough before I reach dessert. (*As he starts to serve the soup, HOWARD enters. HELEN and ROGER regard each other with a significant glance. HOWARD comes to the table.*)

HOWARD

Do I intrude?

HELEN

What do you think about it?

HOWARD

I was not quite sure; that is why I asked.

HELEN (*rising*)

You returned early.

HOWARD

Yes; you see, the early bird catches the worm.

HELEN

And it sometimes gives him indigestion.

HOWARD

Not at such a delightful repast as this and in such good company. (*ROGER rises.*) Pray keep your seat, Roger; don't let me disturb you. Helen, my dear, are you not going to invite me to draw up? I missed my dinner at the club.

HELEN

Oh, you missed your dinner!

HOWARD

To be more exact, I missed Hawksby; and as he was the one I wanted to see, I thought you might be lonely, and so came home to keep you company. You see, Roger, I am a model husband, for I had no idea you would be good enough to look in on Helen.

ROGER

Yes, I was fortunate.

HOWARD

It seems we both were, and Helen most of all. I presume you are equal to entertaining two men, my dear.

HELEN

Considering the lack of practice I have had of late in keeping one company, I will do my best.

HOWARD

No woman can do more than her best.

HELEN

Sometimes she can.

HOWARD

In what way, pray?

HELEN

She can do her worst.

HOWARD

I cannot judge a side of you that I have never seen.

HELEN

You haven't taken time to see many sides of me of late.

HOWARD

Really, Roger, that is a most unjust accusation, I assure you. Do you think a man with such a charming wife would willingly absent himself from her?

ROGER

It does not seem likely.

HOWARD

There, my dear, you see he agrees with me—though I must admit that business has been a selfish master of late. But, Helen, aren't you going to invite me to dinner, too, seeing that I gave up an evening at the club to be here?

HELEN

The club had first claim tonight, so I'm afraid I'll play a poor second.

HOWARD

I'm sure you underrate yourself. Don't you think so, Roger? Well, now that I have an invitation, suppose I set you a chair here, my dear. (*He places another chair at the back of the table.*) Then I can take the place opposite Roger. I hope I don't disturb any arrangement. It is rather awkward when one disarranges the order of a dinner. Now we are all comfortable and cozy.



Ah, I see you were serving, Roger. If Helen will get another plate, please. Jane has a night out, hasn't she?

HELEN

Yes, she has.

HOWARD

And I expected to have one, but the unexpected often happens. Unexpectedly pleasant, too—for instance, your presence, my dear Roger.

ROGER

I'm glad you appreciate the pleasure.

HOWARD

None more so—none more so. The plate, Helen dear.

HELEN

How long is this farce going to continue?

HOWARD

What farce, my dear Helen?

HELEN

The one you are playing.

HOWARD

Oh, I shouldn't call it a farce—and I hope it isn't a tragedy yet; let us say a comedy.

ROGER

I assure you, Howard—

HOWARD

Entirely unnecessary, my dear Roger, entirely unnecessary. Now if you will get the plate, Helen, please—

HELEN

I'm not going out of this room. If you have anything to say, say it in the presence of both of us.

HOWARD

What should I have to say? Really, I have been making conversation. I've been waiting for you two to talk, and merely filling in the pauses to keep them from being awkward.

ROGER

I'll admit the situation is a little awkward.

HOWARD

Pray don't make an admission that is damaging to yourself.

ROGER

I am not thinking of myself but of your wife.

HOWARD

Your presence here indicates that you

have given a great deal of your thoughts to my wife.

HELEN

Which is more than you can say in defense of yourself.

HOWARD

Do you think I need a defense?

HELEN

I certainly do. The man who does not look after his own needs the protection of a weakness I do not possess.

HOWARD

Doesn't the present situation prove that you have a weakness?

HELEN

No, it does not. It proves that I have strength to assert my own rights. If you did not give me the attention due to my sex, it is my privilege to turn to one who does. Do you think that I am going to sit peacefully at home while my lord roams abroad, and be grateful for the few favors he is pleased to fling me at his leisure? No, indeed. I am an individual, and do not propose to sink myself in you. You wooed me ardently enough to get me, but to have is to hold; and if your grip slipped, it is your own fault if another picked up what you let fall.

HOWARD

Am I to understand—

HELEN

You are to understand whatever you are capable of. There were danger signals but you ran by them. Now that a smash has come, you have only yourself to blame for your own blindness.

HOWARD

But I am not blind now; my eyes are opened.

ROGER

And so are mine.

HOWARD

Then it is with you I have to deal.

HELEN

Not him alone. You disregarded me in the first place, but you cannot do so now. You have brought this situation about by adding the third ingredient; now you will have to settle it as you have made it.

HOWARD

As I have made it? The only thing I have done is to make a fool of myself in trusting you.

HELEN

No, you made a fool of yourself in not treating me as a companion, a wife, not a convenience. But you did not make a fool of me, because I refused to be made a fool of.

HOWARD

What has this man made of you?

ROGER

That is enough. You cannot insult her in my presence!

HOWARD

She is my wife.

ROGER

That does not give you the right—

HOWARD

How dare you talk of rights?

HELEN

How dare *you*? You have disregarded my rights until I take them in my own hands, and then you drag your rights in at this late hour to mend a situation your own neglect of me has made! That is a man's justice!

HOWARD

In justice to myself I must defend my own. This is my house and this man is an invader. I have a right to protect my home, and I intend to do it.

HELEN

How?

HOWARD (*drawing a pistol*)  
This way!

HELEN (*in terror*)  
Howard, for God's sake, think!

ROGER (*throwing up his hands*)  
I am unarmed.

HOWARD

When a man goes housebreaking he should be armed.

ROGER

Not when the householder is careless enough to leave the door wide open. Then he only invites intrusion.

HOWARD

In this case the intruder is liable to be carried out by the coroner.

HELEN

Howard, stop being melodramatic. Put that pistol down before your nervousness causes you to pull the trigger.

ROGER

You have all the best of it, and there is really no use holding that gun at such a dangerous angle.

HOWARD

Then stand where you are and let us talk it over.

(HELEN and ROGER exchange glances as HOWARD lowers the pistol. HELEN moves gradually toward the electric switch. ROGER edges around to the front of the table, and his right hand creeps toward the water decanter.)

ROGER

The question is: what kind of a compromise are you willing to make?

HOWARD

I—I compromise with *you*?

ROGER

At least give me an even chance to render what satisfaction one man can demand of another.

HELEN

Stop this talk, both of you. I don't seem to be considered by either one. Really, the solution is in my hands.

HOWARD

No, in mine! (*He points the pistol again at ROGER.*)

HELEN

Roger!  
(ROGER dodges and seizes the decanter. HELEN switches off the lights. There is a shot in the darkness, then the sound of a violent struggle—a crash as the table is upset, a scuffle of feet. A silence follows; then a door slams. In a moment the lights are turned on. HOWARD is standing alone with one hand on the electric switch, the pistol in the other. He is breathing hard and his clothing is in disorder. Two blasts of an auto horn sound outside. HOWARD rushes to the window, then comes slowly down.)

HOWARD

I wonder which is the luckiest man?

CURTAIN.

# GIPSY JEWEL SONG

By Martha Haskell Clark

**F**OUR jewels, linked by a golden chain, I bore on a wearied breast,  
And one burned blue with a sapphire's hue  
As clear as a woman's eyes;  
One glittered white with a diamond's light  
As cold as a dream that dies;  
One gleamed ablaze with a ruby's rays  
As sharp as a hidden pain,  
And one lit green with an emerald's sheen  
As bright as a quest in vain—

Four jewels, fair as a lying hope, and linked by a heart's unrest.

I cooled the blue of the sapphire's flame in the heart of the open sea,  
And the sea wind smote on its harp of mists, and sang wild songs to me.

The moor wind told me a secret tale, by the edge of the sleeping town,  
Where I left the emerald tucked away in a fold of the grassy down.

The diamond gleams on a hemlock bough, by the side of a snow-swept trail,  
Where the hill winds sat by my dying fire, while the light of the stars grew pale.

The ruby's scarlet I flung away, in the flood of the sunset's wine,  
While the night wind drank me a stirrup cup from beakers of tossing pine.

And the useless chain, with its golden links, bereft of their jeweled load,  
I clasped on the neck of a gipsy girl I met on the Open Road.

Four jewels gleam in the waiting world, wherever my footsteps pass,  
And one burns blue with a sapphire's hue  
As clear as the springtime sky;  
One glitters white as a frost-starred night  
Or the drift of a snowflake by;  
One gleams ablaze with a ruby's rays  
As warm as a wayside fire,  
And one shines green with an emerald's sheen  
On the trails of my heart's desire—

Four jewels, linked by a golden chain, on the neck of a gipsy lass.



**W**E are so peculiarly constituted that it takes more than happiness to make us happy.

# L'ENVELOPPE AUX CACHETS ROUGES

Par Maurice Blanc

**L**E soir du vingt-cinquième jour qui suivit la mort de sa femme, Guillaume eut enfin le courage d'entrer dans la chambre de celle qu'il avait aimée d'un amour si profond et si heureux.

Surtout il voulait retrouver le parfum du passé en relisant les lettres écrites par lui aux instants où la vie les obligeait à de cruelles séparations.

Jacqueline gardait toute cette correspondance dans un petit coffret d'ébène et de nacre dont la clef ne la quittait pas. De fait, ayant ouvert, il vit les menues liasses que nouaient des rubans de différentes couleurs, et que des étiquettes classaient d'après des périodes précises: "Guillaume en Algérie. . . . Les grandes manœuvres, etc."

Au-dessous, il y avait un cahier que Guillaume connaissait bien, sorte de journal, souvent interrompu, où Jacqueline notait leurs sensations communes, leurs joies, leurs chagrins.

Mais Guillaume, ayant pris ce cahier, déranger un morceau de velours assujetti au fond du coffret d'ébène. Il enleva l'étoffe et fut très surpris de trouver une enveloppe jaune, marquée de cinq cachets rouges, et qui semblait renfermer un certain nombre de papiers.

Sur l'enveloppe, il reconnut l'écriture de sa femme. Il lut:

*A remettre, après ma mort, à mon amie Henriette Decize.*

Guillaume n'eut pas une seconde d'hésitation. Si loyal qu'il fût et quoique, du vivant de Jacqueline, il n'eût jamais ouvert une lettre adressée à sa femme, d'un geste brusque, sans réfléchir, poussé par un instinct plus fort

que tout, il rompit les cachets et déchira l'enveloppe.

C'était des lettres, des lettres d'homme.

D'une main tremblante, il saisit l'une d'elles. Elle commençait par ces mots:

*Ma chère adorée. . . .*

Il tourna la page et regarda la signature: *Raphaël.*

Tout de suite il comprit. Durant les mois qui avaient précédé la maladie de Jacqueline, Raphaël Dormeval avait été le familier de la maison. Plusieurs fois, en rentrant, il avait trouvé cet homme assis près de sa femme, et il eut l'impression très nette des silences qui accueillirent son arrivée importune.

A ce moment, onze heures sonnaient à la pendule de la chambre.

Guillaume se leva, quitta la pièce, prit son chapeau, son pardessus, et sortit.

Un taxi-auto le mena au cercle de la rue des Capucines. Il monta.

Plusieurs salles étaient remplies par des tables de bridge. Au fond dans une salle plus grande, on jouait au baccara.

Raphaël Dormeval tenait la banque.

Guillaume jeta quelques louis sur un tableau.

Quelques minutes plus tard, sans motif ou du moins sur un motif si futile que les assistants se regardèrent avec stupeur, il insulta Dormeval de la façon la plus grossière. Il y eut un échange de cartes, des témoins furent constitués.

Guillaume rentra chez lui.

Deux photographies de Jacqueline ornaient sa cheminée. Il les jeta au feu. Puis, passant dans le salon, il décrocha le portrait de sa femme, coupa la toile

au ras du cadre, et, morceau par morceau, la brûla.

Il dormit ensuite assez paisiblement et, lorsqu'il se leva le lendemain, il était plutôt calme. Il lui semblait qu'il avait tué la morte une seconde fois, qu'il l'avait tuée en lui, définitivement, pour toujours, et que jamais ne l'obséderait le souvenir épouvantable de la trahison. Un seul être aurait pu le lui rappeler : Raphaël Dormeval. Cet être allait mourir, et plus rien ne resterait du passé.

A onze heures, les témoins se réunirent. A quatre heures du soir, le duel eut lieu.

Dès que Guillaume se trouva en face de son adversaire, un sursaut de rage et de haine le souleva. Seulement alors il souffrit, et il sut vraiment, de la façon la plus profonde, que la vie ne serait pas possible tant que cet homme vivrait.

Deux fois il l'attaqua, avec une violence extrême. On dut les séparer. A la troisième reprise, il se jeta de nouveau sur lui et le traversa d'un coup d'épée.

Dormeval tomba. Il était mort.

Après avoir quitté ses témoins, Guillaume se promena longtemps au Bois. Aucune pensée ne l'agitait. Il se sentait un cerveau lourd, confus, d'où les idées n'arrivaient point à se dégager. Souffrait-il? Sa haine était-elle assouvie?

A l'heure du dîner, il se retrouva chez lui. Son domestique l'avertit qu'une dame attendait au salon, depuis une heure au moins. Il s'y rendit et reconnut Henriette Decize, l'amie dévouée, la confidente à laquelle Jacqueline avait légué ses lettres d'amour. Depuis la mort de sa femme Guillaume n'avait pas revu Henriette, celle-ci étant partie le lendemain en voyage.

Ils échangèrent quelques paroles. Henriette lui annonça qu'elle arrivait à l'instant du Midi, qu'elle avait enfin obtenu le divorce contre son mari et qu'elle comptait se remarier à l'expiration des délais.

—Ah! fit-il, indifférent.

Et tout de suite elle lui demanda, d'un ton un peu embarrassé :

—Est-ce que vous n'avez pas trouvé, dans les papiers de Jacqueline, un paquet pour moi . . . une enveloppe cachetée?

Il regarda la jeune femme avec une expression mauvaise, et il fut sur le point de lui reprocher sa complicité. Mais à quoi bon? Il répondit :

—Oui, j'ai trouvé une enveloppe à votre nom.

—Eh bien?

—Je l'ai brûlée.

Elle parut très mécontente et prononça :

—Comment! Vous l'avez brûlée! Mais vous n'aviez pas le droit!

—Je n'avais pas le droit!

—Non. Ces lettres m'appartenaient. Jacqueline les gardait pour me rendre service; mais il était bien entendu qu'un jour ou l'autre. . . .

Voyant que Guillaume ne semblait pas comprendre, elle reprit avec étonnement :

—Ah! Jacqueline ne vous avait pas dit? Pauvre Jacqueline, je ne lui avais pas demandé tant de discrétion, du moins à votre égard.

—Quoi! quoi! fit-il avec un frisson de terreur.

—Mais oui, expliqua-t-elle. Comme j'étais en instance de divorce, j'avais craint qu'on ne découvrit ces lettres chez moi. . . . Et j'y tenais tellement! Jacqueline seule pouvait me les garder, puisqu'elle connaissait le secret de ma vie.

—Quel secret? balbutia Guillaume.

—Ah! vous ne savez pas . . . J'aimais quelqu'un . . . un de vos amis . . . qui venait souvent ici. . . .

Il eut la force d'articuler :

—Raphaël Dormeval? . . .

—Oui, dit-elle, oui, Raphaël. . . . Nous devons marier. . . . Et je vais le voir tout à l'heure. . . .

Elle était debout, prête à partir.

Il bégaya :

—Vous allez. . . . vous allez. . . .

—Oui, je vais chez lui. . . . Il ne m'attendait que demain. . . . Quelle surprise! C'est pour cela que j'aurais été contente d'avoir ces lettres. . . . Nous devions les relire ensemble, aussitôt libres. . . .

—Ecoutez . . . écoutez. . . .

Guillaume eut la sensation qu'il devenait fou.

Et, sans un mot, sans un geste, tout grelottant de peur et d'angoisse, il la laissa partir. . . .

# THE DRAMA'S SIX O'CLOCK WHISTLE

By George Jean Nathan

**I**T seems to be the omnipresent custom and duty of our theatrical commentators, in reviewing the events of each and every theatrical season, to make the ten following luscious statements:

- I. It has been a bad season from a financial point of view.
- II. Nevertheless, an exceptional number of meritorious plays have been revealed.
- III. Even if the "great American drama" has not yet put in its appearance.
- IV. The American playwright is becoming more and more conspicuous in our theater with each passing year.
- V. Adaptations of foreign plays are losing their grip on the native stage because of the impossibility to transmute the viewpoint of such exotic works into our own.
- VI. The automobile and the moving pictures have become great enemies of the theater.
- VII. What must inevitably result is a reduction in box office charges.
- VIII. The inferiority of the American actor to the English actor is still deeply apparent.
- IX. A new form of musical comedy must be devised to take the place of the present species, that has long since outlived its usefulness.
- X. Mr. Charles Frohman's repertoire theater, announced positively to open the first of next season, will supply us with a long felt and much needed want.

Imagine Joe Weber without his stomach pad. Imagine Nat Goodwin without a wife. Picture, if you can, Brioux without a fresh dramatic idea; fancy, if you can, Caillavet and De Flers with one. Or, if it be not too large a strain, conceive of Pierre Veber without James Gordon Bennett! If this be not asking too much, and if you find it possible to send your minds thus far afield into the distant realms of mythology, you will be able to comprehend the tragi-comic

position, the sheer hopelessness, the complete helplessness of our theatrical critics were they to wake up some dour morning in June and find themselves robbed of the dear old rubber stamp decalogue. For years salaries have been paid out for this sort of thing. For years salaries probably will be paid out for this sort of thing. Indeed, I know of no easier way to make money, unless it be to paraphrase "Tammany" into "My Sumurun Girl," "Scheherezade" into "The Gaby Glide," manuekleinize Mascagni into Hippodrome tunes, joehowardize Gustav Luders into La Salle Theater song hits or, if you are a playwright, to get your share of two dollars a seat from American playhouse patrons by persuading them to think they think you think when you only think you think and they only think they think about what you think you think. Each "review of the season" that we encounter in the prints is as much like every other "review of the season" that we have encountered in the prints as each critic's estimate of his own abilities is like every other critic's estimate of *his* own abilities and as each critic's estimate of every other critic's abilities is like every other critic's estimate of each other critic's abilities. This, however, as the man said when he fervently and with great ardor seated himself next to the beautiful girl of doubtful reputation, is beside the question.

The beauty of these conventional retrospective surveys of the theatrical seasons rests in the sparkling fact that they cause the average reader none of the mental discomfort that is born of being confronted with something he has

not seen before. By the coördinate token, parenthetically, do we discover the reason for the extensive popularity of Mr. Brisbane's editorials, Mr. Hyslop's contributions to science and Mr. William Winter's opinions on the plays of Shakespeare. The further and supreme beauty of these customary appraisals of the theatrical seasons reposes in the fact that they assist materially and grandly in detracting from the vastly adored and contumacious fable that it is so much easier for dramatic critics to be "clever" than it is for them to be simple and natural. That much of this decalogue palaver that is peddled broadcast at the end of each season is generally perfectly untrue is never even remotely suspected by the innocent and gullible native reader. The latter always accepts as fact anything that is dull.

I have never held it to be the province or duty of the critic to tell his patients at the conclusion of each theatrical year whether or not Lee Shubert's balance in the bank is greater or less than it was at the same time a twelfth-month ago. Nor have I ever held it to be his function to speculate for his patients' benefit on how the purchase of an automobile by Algernon Swoggle out in Oil City, Pa., is surely going to hurt the box office receipts when Klaw and Erlanger book the latest version of "Ben Hur" at the local opera house. And so each year I content myself humbly, meekly, submissively with playing in my own backyard.

Leaving the beloved decalogue to other and more practised hands, therefore, I now instead proceed, after a personal custom long since established, to set down, in the stipulated tables of ten, the presentations and performances most deserving of intelligent audition during the dramatic year just passed. Exclusive of Strindberg's gorgeous piece of dramatic craftsmanship, "The Father," and the wondrously melodious dramatic poetry of Synge rendered by the Irish Players, to compare either of which with even the most deserving of the season's wares would be manifestly unfair—to the season's wares, I here-

with submit my estimate of the ten best new straight plays of the season 1911-1912, ranged in the order of critical preference:

1. "Kismet" (Knoblauch)
2. "The Pigeon" (Galsworthy)
3. "Kindling" (Kenyon)
4. "The Only Son" (Smith)
5. "The Typhoon" (Leyngel)
6. "The Talker" (Fairfax)
7. "Passers-by" (Chambers)
8. "Buntz Pulls the Strings" (Moffat)
9. "The Woman" (De Mille)
10. "The Return from Jerusalem" (Donnay)

"Oliver Twist," an excellent presentation, comes scarcely under the heading of new plays even if the version presented be fresh to our stage. "Disraeli," a large looming popular success, "Bought and Paid For," another, and "The Return of Peter Grimm," still another, are dismissed as having small intrinsic honest dramatic reason. The first passes current muster alone by virtue of a truly admirable interpretation of the leading role by George Arliss, the second primarily by virtue of one exceedingly well drawn character, and the third by virtue of Mr. Belasco's persuasive staging and Mr. Warfield's eminent acting. None of these plays reveals any sound ingrained justification for a place at the table. Severe quarrel may be found with my ninth and tenth selections. Indeed, I have even wrangled with myself in these two instances, but, after due deliberation, I can reconcile myself to no satisfactory substitutes. You may blame me or you may blame the season; you have the choice. To this unpretending head, the plays chronicled seem, in the order named, more than any other plays of the season to meet the combined demand for thought, style and method of treatment, intelligent entertaining intestines, lack of empty theatrical subterfuge and of mental indiscipline, and for object, subject and grace and calm honesty of conception. More intimate and extended reasons for the positions accorded these products in this table of comparative worth may be encountered in my reviews of the plays at the time of original production.

Among the farces, I award McHugh's



"Officer 666" the leading honors, with Howard's "Snobs" as the runner-up. And to Reinhardt's production of the pantomime of sex rampant, "Sumurun," I give place as the most compelling theatrical curiosity of the year.

Come we to pieces with music. And come we, coincidentally, after we have recorded our choices, to fist fights, to ominous whisperings as to our sanity and to perfectly audible cries of "Damp-phool!" Very plainly, in any attempt to rate the musical presentations of a season, the prime concern that must remain uppermost in the head of the statistician is the insistent cautioning of his readers to remember that the distance between, say, No. 1 and No. 2 in the table may be infinitely less than that between, say, No. 5 and No. 6. Retaining this in mind and with the reminder that musical plays are largely a matter of mood anyway, cast your eyes over what seems to me to be the comparatively relative *amusement* value—and that only—of the ten leading tune exhibits of the year gone by:

1. "The Enchantress"
2. "The Quaker Girl"
3. "The Rose Maid"
4. "The Red Widow"
5. "The Wedding Trip."
6. "The Little Millionaire"
7. "Gypsy Love"
8. "Little Boy Blue"
9. "A Winsome Widow"
10. "Over the River"

To the Winter Garden, as an institution, goes my indorsement as New York's one surest place of light tune entertainment and to the Weber-Fields jubilee my wreath for having been the most interesting music show event of several seasons. To the revival of "Robin Hood" go the singing honors of the year and to "Peggy" goes the irrefragable tribute of having been the saddest cut, the supremest sinapism, of all.

From a lengthy catalogue, I select and set down the ten following plays as they appear to me to stand in the relative contest for the season's booby prize:

1. "The Wife Decides"
2. "The Marriage-Not"
3. "A Man of Honor"
4. "Next"
5. "The Three Lights"

6. "Making Good"
7. "Uncle Sam"
8. "The Grain of Dust"
9. "The Stranger"
10. "The Runaway"

In chronicling the ten best performances among the unstarred and unfeatured actors, I find myself envired this season with a none too tranquil task. After a patient and obdurate struggle with the statistics, I discover that twenty-five worthy names linger on my record—a mighty number, it would seem, in a day when the talents of mummies come in for hefty assault. Out of the list I have finally selected the following performances as most deserving of praise:

1. Mr. Frank Reicher (in "The Pigeon")
2. Mr. Arnold Daly (in "The Return from Jerusalem")
3. Mr. Julian L'Estrange (in "The Lady of Dreams")
4. Mr. Sidney Valentine (in "The Butterfly on the Wheel" and "The Pigeon")
5. Mr. Fred O'Donovan (in "The Playboy of the Western World" and "Birthright")
6. Mr. H. Reeves Smith (in "Green Stockings")
7. Mr. Paul Ker (in "The Million")
8. Mr. Frank Craven (in "Bought and Paid For")
9. Mr. Russ Whytal (in "The Great Name")
10. Mr. George Probert (in "Kindling")

Other performances that are to be mentioned as having been highly meritorious were those of John Emerson in the trial exhibition of "The Bargain," John Cope and Cuyler Hastings in "The Woman," Ernest Lawford and A. G. Andrews in "Passers-by," Charles Richman in "Bought and Paid For," Frederick Truesdell in "Maggie Pepper" and Edmund Maurice in "Dear Old Charlie." Also Sanderson Moffat in "Bunty Pulls the Strings," Conway Tearle in "The Rack," Frederic Perry in "The First Lady in the Land," Percy Helton in "Peter Grimm," Evelyn Beerbohm in "The Butterfly on the Wheel," Fred Eric in "Kismet" and, early in the season before he was elevated to the featured or "starred" position, Arthur Byron in "Thy Neighbor's Wife."

A labor not so baffling is a summary of the best performances among the unstarred and unfeatured women players

during the season of 1911-1912. In this relative order do I bestow my awards:

1. Mme. Ludmilla Liarova (as Mrs. Alving in the Orloff presentation of "Ghosts")
2. Miss Madge Titheradge (in "The Butterfly on the Wheel")
3. Miss Eileen O'Doherty (in "Birthright")
4. Miss Sara Allgood (in "Riders to the Sea")
5. Miss Laurette Taylor (in "The Bird of Paradise")
6. Miss Ruth Chatterton (in "The Rainbow")
7. Miss Jean Cadell (in "Buntz Pulls the Strings")
8. Miss Rosalind Ivan (in "The Father")
9. Miss Florence Reed (in "The Typhoon")
10. Miss Pamela Gaythorne (in "The Pigeon")

Two other performers to whom I wish to extend critical respects are twelve-year-old Miss Edna May Hamel for her work in "The Sign of the Rose" and Miss Elita Proctor Otis for her "Deep Sea Kitty" in "The Greyhound."

The most beautiful scenic picture of the season, in this estimate, was revealed in "The Garden of Allah," and showed the far stretching starlit Sahara, breathless in the silver-shot purple of the tropic night. The most effective and moving dramatic speech occurred in the second act of "The Only Son," where young Brainerd, fighting for his mother's name against his father's stolid decision on divorce, implores and begs the man through quivering lips and eyes wet with tears to remember what the woman, now shamed and disgraced, did for him and what she meant to him in the days of their early struggles. Second in effect I nominate the speech in "Kindling" wherein Maggie Schultz, the woman of the tenements, about to bear a child and cornered as a thief, cries out to her husband:

"You showed me the game we was up against. I finally woke up to what I had comin' to me. Them people owned our home; they owned us, and if I dared to bring a life into the world they'd own that, too. Well, they went too far, so I went up there and took what I needed—what was mine. I had a right to, I tell ye. Yes, a right—a right to my share of life, just as they have, just as any animal has. I didn't ask fer comfort, I didn't ask fer happiness—that's fer their kind uptown, that's the law—but there's some things they've got to let me have—me! and the lowest animal livin'. You're a man, an' you're goin' to have food and drink, ain't ye? Ye got a right to live, and ye'll steal and ye'll murder to do it. Well, I'm a

woman, and God gave me a greater right than that. He gave me the power to give life—and there's no want of my body or soul so loud. It will be satisfied, my greatest want of all. Them people come down here and warn me, warn me if I brought life into the world it would be smothered out, burned up like so much kindling—and fer what? Their pleasure. Think of it! I stole; I am a thief; I'm rotten; I lowered myself in their eyes. Well, let 'em think so. I stole for what I need, and in my own eyes I raised myself far above 'em, way far above 'em."

Third in effect I name the long speech of the wayfarer Ferrand, in the third act of Galsworthy's "The Pigeon," wherein the vagabond recounts his warm philosophy of life, his creed of the open highway, his diagnosis of the souls that are not tame. And fourth, and most graceful from a literary point of view, I submit the mother wail of Maurya, in "Riders to the Sea," when there is brought before her the body of her last son, Bartley:

"They're all gone now and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting holy water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. . . . It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time, surely. . . . They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn! . . . Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living forever, and we must be satisfied."

The most dramatic moment in all the plays of the season was that disclosed in the second act of "The Sign of the Rose." Christmas Eve discovers a poor Italian laborer bringing home a few pitiful toys for his little daughter. The child is playing in the streets below. The father steps out of the dingy tenement to get something the child has wished for and that he has forgotten.

The joy that his only world's treasure will experience when she sees what Santa Claus has brought her has put the long gone sunlight back into his heart, and as he quietly pulls the door closed behind him the smile of a happiness of other days in another and fairer country wreathes his eyes. . . . A queer noise, growing louder, is presently heard from the street. . . . The child's body is carried into the room. She has been run over and killed by an automobile. . . . The women of the neighborhood, shawled and shuddering, enter one by one and cluster before the door of the little room where the body of the girl is laid on the bed. . . . The door in the farther corner opens. The Italian has returned with the toy his Rosa wanted. He sees the women, their backs toward him, peering toward the bed. Not a word is spoken; not a sound is heard. The toy falls from his hand, and slowly creeping, crouching, cowering in the presence of a frightful fear, the Italian moves toward the huddled group—and what lies beyond.

The most amusing—if extremely broad—moment seems to me to have been that in "The Million" where the young sculptor Andrade, upon being apprised that his ticket has won the lottery, begins to celebrate with the aid of his friends by smashing every bit of furniture in his studio, only to learn after all the damage has been done and the place is a wreck that his lottery ticket is lost. The best bit of stage "business" was shown us in "Kismet" where Hajj, the beggar wretch, after being flattered by a favorite of the harem as to his personal charm and grace—qualities he has not heretofore even distantly suspected in himself—begins immediately to affect a majestic strut, a kingly bearing and a vastly condescending mien. The best "curtain" effect was achieved by Mr. Belasco at the end of the second act of "The Woman" where, as the curtain slowly descends, the politicians begin the cross-examination of Wanda Kelly, the telephone operator, in a desperate attempt to get the girl to betray a certain telltale number she has recently called up. Unquestionably the most effective

dramatic physical device, or trick, disclosed was that wrought by Mr. Belasco at the close of "Peter Grimm." Little Willem lies dying on a low couch. The physician steps out of the room a moment. Grimm, returning in spirit, calls to the lad. Willem looks to him, rises from the couch, goes to him, is gathered in his arms and is borne away. The doctor hurries back into the room. He stoops quickly and in alarm before the couch. He pulls back the coverlet. And there lies the body of the lad, pale in death. Another excellent stage producing trick, albeit of quite another and lesser calibre, was that divulged in the battle scene of "The Littlest Rebel" where the device of falling leaves and twigs and boughs of trees along the roadway was employed to indicate the multiplicity of flying shot and shell.

The best musical comedy melody of the year was "The Land of My Own Romance," by Victor Herbert, in the latter's "Enchantress." The catchiest syncopated melody was "The Gaby Glide," delivered at the Winter Garden. The best individual music show dancing is to be credited to Miss Lila Rhodes in "The Little Millionaire"; the best dance *à deux* to Maurice and D'Harville in "Over the River." The most ingratiating chorus maneuver seems to have been the "hoop number" in "The Kiss Waltz," wherein that portion of the chorus physiologically called male indulged itself in a sprightly hoop cotillion. The best humorous line was the "Work's for workmen" of Samuel Burns, the piece of Embankment driftwood, in "Passers-by." The most novel and ingenious scenic invention was revealed in "The Captive," the Winter Garden pantomime. Without interrupting the action of the presentation in any way, a complete change of scene was effected in a manner so suave that it gave the spectator the impression that *he*, rather than the stage setting, was moving toward a different position wherefrom to contemplate the scene.

At this point in my annual review of the season, it has come to be expected of me that I make lasting chronicle of the most beautiful feminine newcomer

to the native boards during the periphery of time in question. Although I have made regular protest to Adolphus, my man of affairs, that so gentle a task was assuredly not the safe portion of a critic, however beautiful he himself might be, Adolphus has as regularly urged me go on and say not nay. I fear for me, however. Last year, when I made record of my opinion that the beauty plaque should go to an unidentified chorus girl in "Marriage à la Carte"—over whose allurements six of the metropolitan critics actually went plumb crazy and frothed at the mouth in the Casino lobby between the acts—I received exactly eighteen letters from members of that chorus each modestly inquiring if the writer happened to be the Venus to whom reference had been made. This year, in order to eliminate the possibility of a recurrence of such a tragedy and to lighten the mail carrier's burden during the hot weather, I have requested a number of my brother reviewers to prepare for me their appraisals of the leading contestants for comeliness honors, ranged in the order of their respective choices. Upon request, I withhold the names of the critical judges. One, a gentleman and scholar, albeit a hypocritic fellow, assured me that it would be "undignified" for him to come out in the open with his beauty list. Fiel! Undignified! I call it rather classical, the task of an artist, of a connoisseur, of a student of the fine arts, of a practised savant! Another and still another desired me to keep their identities secret if only for their wives' sake. And a fourth bade me not disclose his rascality on the grounds that he always pretended to his fellow men that he was too "deep" for this sort of thing. Investigation of the slips on which my four brothers inscribed their selections discloses seventeen different candidates. Ranged in the order in which they received the most votes, I submit the six leading names:

1. Miss Madge Titheradge (in "The Butterfly on the Wheel")
2. Miss Gertrude Bryan (in "Little Boy Blue")
3. Miss Enid Leslie (in "Dear Old Charlie")
4. Miss Ina Claire (in "The Quaker Girl")

5. Miss Leopoldine Konstantin (in "Sumurun")
6. Miss Ruth Chatterton (in "The Rainbow")

My personal sentiments in this extremely delicate, though happy, matter are not included in the compilation of the above table. I wish today to refrain from comment of any kind. I am no artist, no connoisseur, no practised savant. And besides, I am getting old.

Each theatrical season is impregnated with a surplusage of mysteries of a smaller order, but mysteries none the less. Toward the solution of a few of these I have enlisted from time to time the services of my good friend, William J. Burns, detective and oyster eater extraordinary. A mystery not indirectly correlated with one we know as "The Adventure of the Hidden Furniture"—in which, incidentally, we have deduced that the reason producers so love plays like "The Fatted Calf," "The Explorer," et cetera, whose acts are laid in the summertime, is to be found in the sly fact that in such plays they may substitute ten dollars' worth of cretonne coverings for expensive new furniture, pictures and brackets—is one we call "The Adventure of the Brady Scenery." This is probably not so much a mystery, however, as it is a game, the game consisting in trying to figure out where you have seen the scenery used in the latest of William A. Brady's productions before. This game has come to be one of the critics' most popular diversions. A Brady production with a newly painted set of scenery, I may remark, would unquestionably cause as much, if not more, excitement and consternation on Broadway as the news that Louis Mann was at last appearing in a good play. According to facts discovered by Burns and myself, all the scenery used during the season in the numerous Brady productions—and that means fully three different pieces (one piece frequently being rushed from the Comedy Theater to the Playhouse and thence to the West End in one evening to serve its place in different acts of as many different plays)—was originally used in 1879 by the Southern company of "The Banker's Daughter." In order to be perfectly fair and equitable in the

matter and to present both sides of the case, it must be chronicled that some of Mr. Brady's close friends and associates stoutly deny this. They have assured me that the information that Burns and I have received is all wrong, and that all the Brady scenery was originally used, not by the Southern company of "The Banker's Daughter" as we were led to believe, but by the company that was assembled to present "Evangeline" in the one-night stands in 1876 after its tremendous success at the Globe Theater in Boston. Mr. Brady's friends are particularly desirous of having me correct my error, as they point out that the statistics offered by Burns and myself do not cover the case fully, that they are altogether too recent and that they may be instrumental in giving the public the false impression that the Brady scenery is newer than is actually the case.

The editing of a complete report on the genealogy of the Brady scenery by Burns and myself was interrupted by the sudden calling away of my detective confrère to investigate a certain aftermath of the case of the several gentlemen who had socialized some Los Angeles scenery with the aid of a stick of georgebernardshaw attached to an alarm clock. Some stray statistics in the fragmentary report, however, reveal the following more recent discoveries: 1. That the first scene in "An Old New Yorker" turned up as the first scene in "The Rack"; 2. That the second act scene in "The Rack" had been the second act scene in "Sauce for the Goose" and was now the last act scene in "Bought and Paid For"; 3. That the second act scene in "Sauce for the Goose" had been the last act scene in "A Woman's Way"; 4. That the first act scene in "Just to Get Married" had been the first act scene in "Sauce for the Goose" and that the last act scene in "Just to Get Married" had been the second act scene of "The Cub," the first act Kentucky mountain "drop" of which had been the Oregon orchard "drop" of "Go West, Young Woman"; 5. That the first act set in "Making Good" had been the first act scene in

"The Storm" and the third act scene in "Making Good" had been the first act scene in both "Just to Get Married" and "Sauce for the Goose"; 6. That the second act set of "Mother" had been the first and second act set of "The Intruder"—but halt! Ink will give out unless great care is exercised. The Brady scenery, whatever it is, has been or may in the future be, has its values. It brings back old times; it recalls to us the days of our youth; it keeps a lot of money in circulation that might otherwise be locked up in the safe of the Lee Lash company; it makes the actors feel at home and robs them of any first night nervousness they might otherwise feel; and—and it gives the Coburn Players a *raison d'être!*

Still another theatrical mystery has occupied the attention of Burns and myself, and this mystery we have catalogued under the heading of "The Adventure of Eva Davenport." The mystery here consists of the complex and brain piquing problem of attempting to deduce why it is that the public's sides always start to shake like so much wine jelly or so many dice boxes every time Eva Davenport comes out upon the stage in a musical show. The sight and sound of Eva Davenport invariably make an audience scream with glee, yell with mirth and fall out of its chair in a large paroxysm of uncontrollable joy. Miss Eva can come out on the stage in a dozen different shows a year and the effect is always precisely the same. And the longer she stays on the stage the more the people laugh. Of course, as you know, Eva Davenport is very fat and always plays a Mrs. Malaprop kind of role. Admitting that the American theatergoing public just adores this sort of character and never tires of it; admitting that to no small degree the American public's idea of humor is vested in a reference to high society as "*haut sauterne*," in referring to "demi-monde" as "demi-tasse" and in pronouncing "artichokes" as "ought-to-chokes," it yet did not seem tenable to us that this fact contributed most largely to Miss Eva's rib tickling powers. And we told ourselves under the rose

that, moreover, this assuredly could not be the case, inasmuch as Miss Eva was by no means possessed of intrinsically astounding comedic qualities with which to make this brand of "humor" seem ever fresh, ever novel and ever side splitting.

What then? We asked the waiter in the restaurant where we were diagnosing the mystery what he could tell us about Eva Davenport, yet after he had consulted with another waiter he assured us that it wasn't on the menu but that he could give us some very nice *timbales glacés* or *aufs Dimitri* instead. We asked the headwaiter, but he informed us with one of those my-poor-dear-man-are-you-from-Erie-Pennsylvania smiles that we were in the wrong room, and that the davenports were kept in the lobby. "Here," he explained with all the insouciance of an Augustus Thomas informing his audience that mental healing is a fact, "we have only chairs." Burns turned to the man seated at the next table and put the question to him. "Why," he asked, "is Eva Davenport?" In a flash, the man replied: "Well, you—why is William H. Taft?" In order to be politic and not to lose the appointment as Ambassador to the Court of St. James—a post on which I may confidentially tell you I have long had my eye, and which, I may also privately whisper to you, I once was forced to decline because I had just loaned my silk hat to a man who wanted to go to Newport for several weeks—I must refuse to express any personal opinions in print to the effect that it is Mr. Taft's embonpoint alone that has caused the nation to regard him as a substantial figure, a man of presence—in short, as a considerable high official and great dignitary. Albeit against my will, I will yet admit that too often in American politics is size confused with power, is fat interpreted as weight. And albeit against my wish, will I also admit that in the cryptogram of the man at the next table did I discover with the able assistance of my adviser the real reason for the Davenport's ability to make you and your theatergoing neighbor laugh as hard as if you had just seen a policeman

kick an inoffensive Italian off the sidewalk or as if you had just read Mary Garden's serious views on grand opera.

It may be that nobody loves a fat man, but it certainly is that everybody loves a fat woman—on the stage. Where fat frequently has made an alderman, aye, even a President, in politics, fat makes a comedian *every time* in the theater, at least in your eyes. Nothing is so enormously funny to you when you sit in an orchestra seat as the spectacle of a hunk of meat trying to be comfortable back of the footlights. Fat is your one-best-bet idea, above every other idea, of humor. And when it is on a woman, you yell your fool heads off! You may snicker at Macklyn Arbuckle; you may grin at Thomas A. Wise; but the sight of an Eva Davenport will make your previous degrees of merriment take on the relatively trivial aspect of a metaphor of G. K. Chesterton's measured with one of Maeterlinck's or of a simile of mine measured with one of Compton MacKenzie's. "Fat," so Burns analyzes the crime in hand, "when worn by a woman on the stage makes the rubes laugh for the same reason that the same rubes laugh when they see the same fat woman off the stage trying to get off a street car." The average American musical-comedy-goer laughs most heartily at those things that his mother would have spanked the pants off him for had he laughed at them when he was a child in the process of being brought up decently. Having lost all his manners, and having dropped any respectabilities of taste that were originally injected into him by his parents, directly upon arriving at his majority the average American theater-goer rates his five favorite laugh provokers in the following order:

1. A woman who weighs 300 pounds
2. " " " " 275 "
3. " " " " 250 "
4. " " " " 225 "
5. " " " " 200 "

The solution of the great Eva Davenport mystery, therefore, lies in the fact that Eva Davenport weighs three hundred pounds.



# A DIP INTO THE NOVELS

By H. L. Mencken

THE good folk of the Middle Ages, tiring anon of pouring out their obeisance and their cash at the feet of their lords spiritual, had a habit of declaring an occasional hiatus or interregnum, during which the truly prudent bishop retired to some convenient catacomb or other secure place of retreat, while the town scaramouche discharged witticisms from the episcopal throne, and a red flag floated from the cathedral spire, and the baptismal font was filled with malt liquor, and all the bad boys played at "I-spy" and Crusader-and-Saracen in the nave. Such was the so-called *Festa Asinoria*, the feast of asses (or, in later times, of fools), of which you will find much indignant discourse in the ancient tomes.

It came, as a rule, once a twelve-month, usually just before Christmas, but in some dioceses it was a vagrant and movable feast, to be proclaimed and celebrated whenever the burden of reverence began to put unbearable strains upon the popular spine. Whether the ass from which the festival took its name played the role of bishop or merely that of bishop's steed—this the antiquaries fail to tell us. Sometimes perhaps the one, and sometimes the other. But at all events the long-eared animal was always the center of the merry-making, and the rest of the merry-makers took their cue from his character. Light and cheerful doings, indeed, and full of the innocent sacrileges of those days of faith. To charge the censer with old boot heels and cows' hair, to wallop the mock bishop with slapsticks and bladders, to put geese in the chancel and duncecaps on the sacred images, to imitate the rough sports of Gargantua

in the cathedral of Notre Dame and of Pantagruel on the day of Corpus Christi—all this was part of the fun. And then, the *Festa Asinoria* being over and the common people purged of their profane bile, back they went to orderly worship, and the bishops, emerging from the bowels of the earth, once more took their lawful toll of genuflections and currency.

Well, well, a pretty tale, to be sure, but what is the moral of it? The moral—already visible to the astute—is simply this: that, far from being corrupting, it may be actually healthful now and then to ride a jackass into church. And why? Because a too steady piety, like a too steady sobriety, is dangerous to body and soul. Absolute virtue, turning upon itself, may easily become the worst of vices. A man may die of thirst even more quickly than he may die of drink. Those medieval burghers, with the rude wisdom of lowly folk, knew the fact and profited by their knowledge of it. They were always much the better, I believe, for their heathenish flings. Thus discharging, at one devastating salvo, a whole year's accumulations of profanity and indecency, of contumacy and rebellion, they were left clean of all such moral ptomaines. Not a snicker lingered; not a doubt remained in their craws. And so completely restored by their own dionysian act to a pristine docility and state of grace, they were willing and even eager to meet the exactions of their ecclesiastical superiors, and until another fit came on them their loudest bellow in the sanctuary was as the faint harmonic whisper of an undertaker.

All of us are helped by such treasons



to the things we believe in, by such premeditated debauches of blacksliding and ribaldry. If a seidel of Pilsener is worth twenty cents to you or me, it must be worth twenty dollars to the average rabble rouser of the Anti-Saloon League; for whatever his moral horror of the great Bohemian brew, he has veins and arteries like our own, and those veins and arteries shriek piteously now and again for something with more body to it and more steam in it than well water. And if a single hearty "damn," bursting from his surcharged system, can reduce the temperature of a steamboat mate by one hundred thousandth of a degree Fahrenheit, then the same "damn," loosed by an archbishop, may conceivably save him from apoplexy. So speaks logic—and speaking so, it gives me excuse for advising you to read "ZULEIKA DOBSON," by Max Beerbohm (*Lane*), a burlesque novel. We of this club are in the habit of taking novels very seriously. We burrow, month by month, with perfectly straight faces, into their abysmal problems of psychology and physiology, of politics and sex; we engage in laborious and scientific dissections of their technique; we examine each new one in the light of the classics of its own purport and quality; we constantly assume, as a first principle, that the novel is an art form as dignified as the epic or the symphony, and that it is worth while to give time and thought to it; we insist that, whatever its play of humor, it deal earnestly with the human beings it presumes to depict; even when we ourselves indulge in titters and cat calls, it is only because we hope thus to punish trifling by the novelist himself. Therefore let us put away for a hygienic moment or two all such fine assumptions and sobrieties, and take a heretical vacation. In brief, let us guffaw a bit with Max, for this burlesque novel of his is a burlesque upon the whole art of novel writing, upon the whole science of hypothetical psychology—and what is more, it is genuinely and uproariously funny.

Naturally enough, "ZULEIKA DOBSON" is a love story, for the novel, to

nine-tenths of us, is unimaginable save as a love story, and naturally enough, the heroine is a being of stupendous beauty and of even more stupendous charm. By profession a stage magician, she is yet a lady—for isn't her grandfather warden of Judas College, Oxford?—and being a lady, she is a hundred times as seductive as if she were an ordinary houri of the boards. Before her greatest romance begins she has slain her thousands on two continents. In Paris, whither she went for a month's engagement, she struck the whole town dumb. "The jewelers of the Rue de la Paix soon had nothing left to put in their windows—everything had been bought for 'La Zuleika.'" For a whole month baccarat was not played at the Jockey Club—every member had succumbed to a nobler passion. For a whole month the whole demi-monde was forgotten for one English virgin." And after that first triumph capital after capital groveled at her feet. In Berlin the students escorted her home every night with torches, and Prince Vierfünfsechs-Siebenachtneun wooed her so wildly that the Kaiser had to lock him up. In St. Petersburg the Grand Duke Salamander-Salamandrovitch deluged her with precious stones and nearly died of love of her. In Madrid the most famous living matador committed suicide in the *plaza de toros* because she would not smile upon him. In Rome the Pope launched a bull against her—and in vain. In Constantinople the Sultan offered her Divan A-r-Center in his seraglio. In New York she held the front pages of the newspapers for weeks and weeks and all the millionaires of Pittsburgh combined to entertain her.

And yet when Zuleika goes to Oxford to pay a filial visit to her venerable grandpa, her own heart is still whole. Sick unto death of homage, the thing she craves is scorn. Her dream is of a hero, young, handsome and rich, who will look into her violet eyes—and then turn away with a sneer. She is in search of the lordly, magnificent, tyrannical male, of the *übermensch* who will conquer and subdue her, of the master foreordained. Is he at Oxford? Is he

among those pink youths who already, before she has been in the town half an hour, begin dashing off sonnets to her eyebrows and hexameters on her nose? Alas, it scarcely seems probable! But halt—what of this splendid fellow who comes galloping down the street, this Adonis upon a polo pony, with his riband of blue and white—what, in brief, of the young Duke of Dorset? A misogynist, indeed, to match Zuleika, the misanthrope! He, too, sickens of admiration, particularly of that admiration which spans the gulf of sex. A nobleman, a millionaire and a celebrity at three and twenty, his dream is of a woman who will not bore him with her love. He has tasted nearly all of the sweets of life. He has seen the world; he has taken Oxford's prizes; he has made a name for himself in the House of Lords; he has won the Garter; he has known passion and conquest. All he asks now is peace—and the brand of peace he pictures to himself is that which has its roots in celibacy, in existence *a capella*.

Therefore when he and Zuleika face each other across the dinner table of the innocent old warden of Judas on the evening of her arrival, the ensuing duel of sex is necessarily of unexampled fury and ferocity. Will Zuleika, by falling in love with the Duke, send him flying in dismay, or will the Duke, by falling in love with Zuleika, disgust her and freeze her? The gross evidence, the outward and visible play of events, seems to point to the former consummation. That is to say, the Duke, after a terrific exchange of malicious animal magnetism, suddenly dashes from the table and the house, leaving a half-peeled orange on his plate. Has Zuleika fallen in love with him and so scared him out of his boots? For the moment, yes. But when early next morning she pursues him to his rooms, bent upon worshiping him for his heartlessness, she makes the staggering discovery that his flight was really inspired not so much by fear of *her* love as by horror at his own. In brief, the Duke has fallen in love with Zuleika as she has fallen in love with him—and that very fact of course makes it impossible for her to

love him further. Her quest is for a man who can resist her, for a man unshaken by her charms, for a man arctic enough to flout her and laugh "Ha, ha!" at her devotion. The more the Duke pleads his suit the less she loves him. In the end she tells him calmly that she can never, never be his.

Ah, fatal girl! Little do you reck the depth and virulence of that ducal passion! Is Dorset to be put off like a common admirer? To be sure he is not. Self-respect, duty to his noble order, the honor of his ancient race—all demand some overt act of protest, some awe inspiring and memorable signal of rebellion. What suggests itself? Suicide, of course—the last, sublime act of many a greater man. The Duke decides to drown himself—to drown himself in the river Isis on the day of the Magdalen-Judas boat race, and in the full robes and regalia of the Most Noble Order of the Garter. And to that desperate act, after one or two false starts, he actually proceeds. Just as the boats heave into view flying down the river, he wraps the mantle of his high dignity about him, cries "Zuleika!" in a loud voice, and plunges from the upper deck of the Judas houseboat. And what is more, every other undergraduate in Oxford plunges with him! All love Zuleika, and all wither in her scorn. The Duke, their leader, has shown the way. By squads and companies, by battalions and regiments, they follow him. The river is full of drowning youths. The very crews jump from the boats. And not a soul is saved!

So much for the machinery of the tale. It is in its detail of course that Max particularly shines—in the little sidelights upon Oxford legends and prejudices, in the little flings at Oxford snobs and magnificoes. You will miss, I dare say, some of the best of its whimsicalities, as I have doubtless done, for only an Oxford man may be expected to understand them all; but even so the book will delight you from cover to cover. The style of Max was never more fantastically graceful; the vocabulary of Max was never more sonorous and amazing. I rescue "dulcify," "dae-

dal," "ineluctable," "peripety," "orgulous," "splendent," "meiosis," "aseity," "otiose," "commorient" and "ataraxy"—a hundred others float down the stream. And nothing could be more hilarious than some of the colloquies à *faire*: for example, that between Zuleika and the Duke, when he tries to stagger her with his splendors, and that between the Duke and his undergraduate followers, when he tries to dissuade them from their last grim following, and that between Zuleika and her ancient granddad, after the Isis has swallowed the whole youth and chivalry of Oxford. Here indeed Mr. Beerbohm has made a first rate contribution to a department of humor which shows remarkably few good examples in English, for though comic novels are common among us, burlesque novels are very rare. Setting aside Mark Twain's medieval romance and the parodies of Thackeray and Bret Harte—and a parody of a definite novel or of a definite novelist's mannerisms is not quite the same thing as a burlesque of the Novel—what, in truth, have we to show?

From conscious burlesque to unconscious burlesque. That is to say, to "Ars Amoris," by Marian Cox, which fills some two hundred pages, or about seventy per cent of the volume called "SPIRITUAL CURIOSITIES" (*Kennerley*). Here we observe the Babylonish luxuriosity of Mrs. Sabille Orman, the young and petted wife of an osseocapital Wall Street man. The world is Mrs. Orman's oyster. Thousands slave and sweat their lives away that she may swathe her person in silks and laces, and loll upon cushions stuffed with nightingale's down, and live in rooms carpeted with priceless Persian rugs, and adorn her hair with jewels fit for a rajah's crown, and nourish her body with victuals of ethereal and transcendental delicacy. One feels that a muddy footprint upon the floor would send her to bed for a week; that the sight of a single cockroach would strike her blind. And yet even so exquisite, so ineffable a being has dirty work to do—if not dirty work of the hands, then at least dirty work

of the soul. Her husband, the numskull aforesaid, gets into difficulties. Certain politicians—cheap demagogues, pediculine vulgarians—interfere with his ravishment of the common people. In particular, one politician, a certain Lawrence Ilford. Ilford, it appears, is above ordinary bribery; the regular agents of Mr. Orman cannot reach him. But what money cannot do, love may accomplish—and Mrs. Orman decides to try. In ten days Ilford is ready to eat out of her hand. Going further, he actually eats. That is to say, he betrays his constituents and saves Orman. And then Mrs. Orman gives him the laugh. Cruel woman—and ah, so foolhardy! Little does she know, at the start, what a desperate man she is dealing with! But she *does* know, suddenly and painfully, when he kidnaps her in a taxicab and takes her to a flat in Harlem and locks her up in a room with a ton of radium and so dooms her to a slow and intolerable death, apparently of eczema! No wonder she bawls: "Oh, Lawrence, Lawrence—I love you, I love you! Take me! I am yours! Do with me as you will! You are my lord, my master, my god!"

What the deuce is it all about? My answer must be that of Mr. Taft to the Cooper Union Socialist: God knows! The canned review says that it is a study "in the subtleties of mood and emotion that characterize men and women of varying types." Again: "Sabille Orman may be considered too astonishing to be real, but she exists and is well known, though not well understood, in New York society. The book is full of epigrams and sheer cleverness, but it has also a strong psychological element." Rubbish! The epigrams, so far as I have been able to separate them from the burbling stream of verbiage, are merely platitudes translated into bad English. For example: "From what could humanity learn justice since the Creator Himself has inflicted the great injustice—of all the sex pains and travail exclusively upon women?" Another: "One must laugh at his mistakes else they kill him." Yet another: "Morality is created either by the moral,

whose pathologic condition, resulting from restraint, renders them incapable of a clear uncongested view of the matter, or by the immoral, who desire to safeguard their own and all immorality by doctrating it for the world as the forbidden and severely penalized." Barring this knock-kneed English, the volume is not unamusing, but its chief value is as an object lesson in the grotesque mendacity of canned reviews.

Another solemn piece of piffle, though of infinitely better workmanship, is "JOSEPH IN JEOPARDY," by the English-woman who uses the pen name of Frank Danby (*Macmillan*). Here we are introduced into just such scenes of melancholy impropriety as those which made a scandalous success of "Dodo"—the one novel which all second rate English novelists imitate soon or late, just as all second rate Americans imitate "The Pit." Fanny Juxton, wife of young Teddy Juxton, son of the enormously opulent Amos Juxton, carries on an intrigue with the Hon. Cosmo Merritt, son of Lord Loughborough, while Cosmo, in his turn, has an affair with Margaret Lemon, a dark-eyed and inflammatory grass widow. Meanwhile the sister of Teddy, married to Dennis Passifal, a foundling, harbors a sort of phosphorescent liking for Roderick Ainsworth, a tenor who sings flat, while Dennis himself, not to be outdone, succumbs to the charms of Lady Diana Wayne, the Hon. Cosmo's widowed sister. I say "succumbs," but the truth is that Dennis never proceeds beyond the statutory limit, for just at the point of departure he is recalled to defend the honor of his wife, whose dealings with Roderick have caused gossip. And so at the end it all comes to nothing—a genuine disappointment, believe me. Frank Danby, of course, is no beginner. The thing is done well, such as it is, but I leave it with the unpleasant impression that it was not worth doing.

More English novels. "WHEN NO MAN PURSUETH," by Mrs. Belloc Lowndes (*Kennerley*), is a detective tale without a detective—all about a bigamist who feeds antimony to Wife No. 2 in the

hope of hastening her dissolution and grabbing her money. "THE UNOFFICIAL HONEYMOON," by Dolf Wyllarde (*Lane*), takes us to a lonely island in midocean and shows us the orthodox pair of castaways. The mercury, for a while, is high in the tube, but nothing really happens, and even after the inevitable rescue it is for long a toss-up whether Leslie Mackelt will become a missionary to the leprous heathen or the bride of Major Miles Trelawny of the Carbines. "FATHERS OF MEN," by E. W. Hornung (*Scribner*), is the tale of a stable boy's battle against social prejudice in an English public school—a rather startling departure for Mr. Hornung, who has chiefly devoted himself in the past to chronicles of roguery, and will go back to them posthaste if he values the free advice of an Old Subscriber. And "CHRISTOPHER," by Richard Pryce (*Houghton-Mifflin*), is a biographical novel in the leisurely Arnold Bennett manner—but with none of Bennett's iconoclastic revelations in it. The tone of the thing, indeed, is almost early Victorian; its viewpoint is frankly romantic; it carries its hero from birth to calf love without once stepping over the borders of the obvious. A very graceful and gentlemanly writer, this Mr. Pryce, and one with an eye for the minor humors of character, but I am unable to add that he has anything very important or interesting to say.

Which brings us to "THE POSITION OF PEGGY," by Leonard Merrick (*Kennerley*), an Englishman who entered into celebrity not long ago with a very clever piece of sentimental comedy called "Conrad in Quest of His Youth." Whether "THE POSITION OF PEGGY" is a work of his remote nonage, exhumed to catch the crowd still chuckling over "Conrad," or a shameless pot boiler, dictated to a red-haired stenographer in the same benign endeavor, and at the rate of five thousand words a day—on this point, I regret to say, I must leave you guessing, for I am not privy to the facts. But if you ask me flatly if the thing is a work of art, if it does credit to the author, then I make answer at once, and with the utmost assurance,

that it is not and does not. It would be difficult, indeed, to find a greater contrast than that between these two books. The one is a thoroughly delightful volume of foolery, with a mellowing touch of poetry; the other is a tedious and irritating compound of improbability and sentimentality. The one, when I read it, made me glow—fat I may be, but I'm still human; the other, I must report veraciously, made me swear. Such is the effect of unexpected disappointment, of high moods foully blasted, of being played for an infant by an English fictioneer!

But what is "THE POSITION OF PEGGY" about? Briefly, it tells the story of a young Londoner who tries for glory as an actor and fails to win it, and then tries for money as a dramatist and fails again. One day, in sore straits, he is tempted to write a blood tub melodrama. He gets fifteen pounds for it—and it makes him famous. Confusion worse confounded! The writing of melodramas is more than he can bear; the one venture will last him a lifetime. But the theatrical managers, eager to caress and woo him as melodramatist, refuse absolutely to look at his serious plays. His huge success has ruined him! Thus we come to Page 305. We are in the midst, it is plain, of an engrossing situation. How is poor Christopher Tatham to extricate himself? How is he to break down the managerial *idée fixe*, and so get, by honest art, the wherewithal to marry Theodosia Moore? Alas, we find out that he *does* these things, but we never find out *how*. On Page 306 there is a jump of four years. Christopher, now an opulent dramatist, plants lobelias in his garden. Theodosia, sitting "in a basket chair under a laburnum tree," inflames her mind with an illustrated weekly. Their joint infant bawls in the house. But how—wherewith—by what route? Mr. Merrick leaves us wondering. In the midst of his story he chops it off—an ineptness of structure matched by many a defect in detail. Maybe he argues that it is not the story of Christopher Tatham at all, but that of Peggy Harper. The title, indeed, hints as

much. But if that is so, then why does he begin with Christopher and end with Christopher?

Another novelist whose form in the second round will disappoint many of his admirers is Jeffery Farnol, who made a great success last year with a picaresque romance called "The Broad Highway," a composition showing hard study of "Tom Jones" and "A Sentimental Journey" and many proofs of genuine talent. Two more books now come from Mr. Farnol. One of them, "MY LADY CAPRICE" (*Dodd-Mead*), is a revised version of a tale first printed in 1906. The other, "THE MONEY MOON" (*Dodd-Mead*), seems to be new. Obviously an economical fellow, for the central device of "MY LADY CAPRICE" appears again in "THE MONEY MOON"—the device, to wit, of enlisting the heroine's young nephew in the desperate business of wooing her. The earlier story has a smartness, of speech and *milieu*, suggesting "The Dolly Dialogues:" one bows to a duchess and holds familiar and epigrammatic discourse with a peeress further down the scale. In the other there is a millionaire hero and a heroine beset by mortgages. How the nephew of that heroine goes hunting buried treasure to save her, and how the hero thoughtfully and discreetly buries it where it will be quickly found, and how the heroine, penetrating the humane plot, rebels against marriage and has to be kidnapped—all this makes a very sweet tale. "Sweet," indeed, is the very word. Not Richard Harding Davis himself ever imbued an idle romance with more flavor of the bonbon.

"THE SICK-A-BED LADY," by Eleanor Hallowell Abbott (*Century Co.*), has a pleasant savor. Mrs. Abbott-Coburn has fancy as well as imagination. Her stories show a fantastic, a poetic touch. Their workmanship is of the most painstaking sort. They are not the common short stories of commerce.

Light and gladsome humor. For example, "THAT HOUSE I BOUGHT," by Henry Edward Warner (*Dillingham*). Here we have the familiar comedy of home making in the suburbs, but without the customary forced fun. Mr.

Warner gets a gentle, a sentimental touch into it. It is an unpretentious but an extremely artistic little story that he tells. "TODDIE," by Gilbert Watson (*Century Co.*), carries us to Scotland and the links of St. Andrew, where David McClure, *alias* Toddie, a bibulous caddie of forty-odd, chases golf balls for Major Dale and nurses an uncompromising distrust of womankind. In the Major's employ is a serving lady, Miss Devina Greig—a lady crossed in love and holding all mankind in abomination. How Toddie and Devina meet, how they blast each other with their incandescent hatreds, and how, thus emptied of those hatreds, they declare an eternal truce—this makes one-half of a double love story. There is dialect in it, but it is dialect kept with bounds. "THE JINX," by Allen Sangree (*Dillingham*), is a collection of baseball stories, some melodramatic, some broadly farcical. One tells of a pair of diamond stars who overload themselves with stimulants in New York, essay to sneak aboard the boat for Boston—and awake next morning in the fo'castle of the three-master *Melrose*, outward bound for the River Plate. Another tells of a dashing third-baseman who brings his cross-eyed girl to the game every day and thereby afflicts his club with a baffling hoodoo. Finally he is paid one hundred dollars to keep her away. A third describes an extraordinary post-season game, with but two spectators in the grandstand. In the main it is artificial stuff, but if you are a baseball crank it will probably amuse you. The same may be said of Charles E. Van Loan's collection of baseball stories published under the title "THE TEN-THOUSAND-DOLLAR ARM" (*Small-Maynard*).

"WHEN WOMAN PROPOSES," by Anne Warner (*Little-Brown*), is the tale of a love chase. When Nathalie Arundel, rich, widowed and twenty-five, comes down the grand stairway in chapter one, she spies Capt. Francis Mowbray across the ballroom, standing by a pillar stroking his magnificent black mustache. A moment later she slips off her wedding ring and hands it to Mrs. d'Yprés, her

fat and faithful friend. "Drop it in your chatelaine," says Nathalie. "I don't want it any more. I am going to marry that man down there." And marry him she does, though the good Captain makes a brave resistance and the whole nation is thrown into a turmoil before he gives up.

The remaining novels must slide by us with a few words of calm, dispassionate description. "A SHIP OF SOLACE," by Eleanor Mordaunt (*Sturgis-Walton*), is the chronicle of a romantic sea voyage by sailing ship from Glasgow to Melbourne. There are two fair passengers—one a young widow suffering from the psychic *sequelæ* of a rowdy marriage, and the other an unwed friend who volunteers to nurse her. When Melbourne is reached at last there is a double job for some honest clergyman. The widow, completely recovered, marries her Glasgow medical adviser, who has rushed out by mail steamer to meet her; and the nurse—well, the nurse marries "the capt'g," for all his Glasgow brogue. "THE CONFESSION OF ARTEMUS QUIBBLE," by Arthur Train (*Scribner*), is the tale of a shyster lawyer's rise and fall. "REDEEMED," by Mrs. George Sheldon Downe, author of "Gertrude Elliott's Crucible" and "Step by Step" (*Dillingham*), shows us what a sad mistake was made by John Hungerford, the distinguished artist, when he divorced his wife Helen and took up with Marie Duncan, that hussy. "THE LOTUS LANTERN," by Mary Imlay Taylor and Martin Sabine (*Little-Brown*), is a new variation (the *n*th) upon the standard story of the dashing Caucasian lieutenant and the poor little Japanese maid, with the usual sprinkling of such ghastly words as *yami-buki*, *musumê*, *shoryobune* and *amma-kamishimo-go*. Old friends are best! "PHILIP STEELE," by James Oliver Curwood (*Bobbs-Merrill*), is a romance of the Canadian Northwest. "THE LOSER PAYS," by Mary Openshaw (*Small-Maynard*), is a tale of the French Revolution. "THE FLAME," by Louise E. Taber (*Harriman*), deals with high life in San Francisco. "THE ROAD," by Frank Savile (*Little-Brown*), is a chronicle of love and daring in the Bal-



kans. "AN AMERICAN SUFFRAGETTE," by Isaac N. Stevens (*Rickey*), is a tract for the New Thought in all its gorgeous forms. Which brings us—*Gott sei Dank*—over the page and in sight of the end.

Americans to ring down the curtain! For example, Meredith Nicholson, whose "HOOSIER CHRONICLE" (*Houghton-Mifflin*) fills over six hundred pages and weighs exactly twenty-six ounces. A long and smooth running tale, with attractive pictures in it of various Indiana worthies, social and political, but not a thing to wring your heart or to add much to your understanding of other hearts. "JOHN RAWN," by Emerson Hough (*Bobbs-Merrill*), shows the same craftsmanship in detail and even worse weakness in plan. Mr. Hough's purpose, it would appear, is to give us a full length study of a ruthless captain of industry, a man of insatiable money lust, a sort of modern Captain Kidd. If so, then why does he permit his hero to remain a plodding railroad clerk until nearly fifty, and why does he make him acquire riches, when his luck turns at last, in such an incredible, *deus-ex-machinery* manner? The whole story, indeed, goes to pieces when John Rawn beards the railroad magnates in their den and browbeats them into risking a fortune upon his half-baked invention.

Here's a book that will interest you owners of motor boats—or riders in other people's motor boats. It's George Fitch's "MY DEMON MOTOR BOAT" (*Little-Brown*), which is the greatest analysis of the private character and hidden idiosyncrasies of this innocent-looking toy that I have come upon in a long career devoted to exploration of the depths to which depravity can descend. A motor boat looks easy. A couple of turns of the flywheel and we're off. No ditches or telegraph poles to run into; no frightened pedestrians to run down; no speed laws or country

constables to look out for; no punctures or blow-outs to fear. Just let 'er go. But Fitch says no. He says that when a motor boat "motes" it's the pleasantest sport imaginable; but when it takes a notion to get cranky it's about the all-firedest, cussedest, most cantankerous contraption ever devised for the abasement of man. Yet the owners of this "demon" boat got a lot of fun out of her, and so will you if you've one atom of humor in your system.

They say the Profession—of course to some minds there is only one profession—has been busily trying to identify the anonymous author of "MY ACTOR-HUSBAND" (*Lane*), but I see no valid reason why the general reading public should join the feverish quest. In her foreword the embittered author of this unflattering picture of stage morals solemnly vouches for its "fidelity and strict adherence to the truth relative to the conditions which surround the player." The lady doth protest too much. The parsnips of literature are no longer buttered by affidavits of this sort. Taken in detail, Webster's Unabridged is a mine of truth. But it is not literature; it is not a novel. By the same token, "MY ACTOR-HUSBAND"—but you get my point.

And now, at the end, "THE OLD NEST," by Rupert Hughes (*Century Co.*), a touching little tragedy of old age. How easy it would have been to make the thing maudlin, mawkish, unbearable! And with what fine art Mr. Hughes has made it nothing of the sort! Here, indeed, is a man who knows how to write—a dramatist and fictioneer upon whom it will be well to keep a weather eye. And here is a tale that will outlive a hundred best sellers. I do not say it made me weep, for I have neither wept nor blushed for seventeen years, but when I remember how near I came to doing the one thing, I almost do the other.







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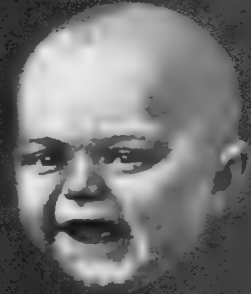
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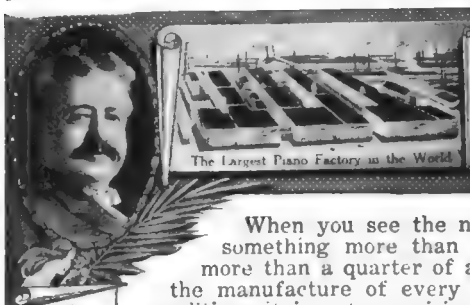
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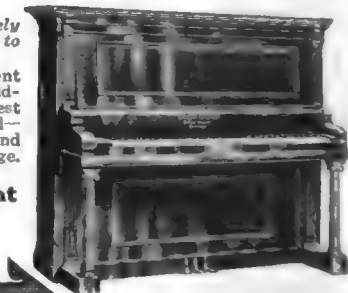
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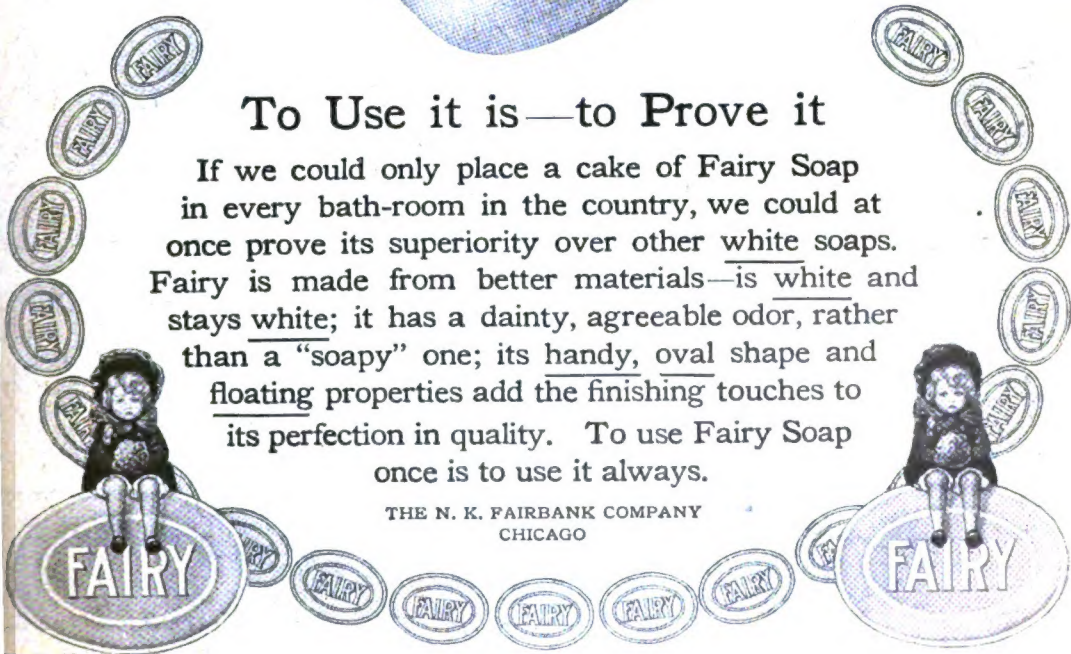
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